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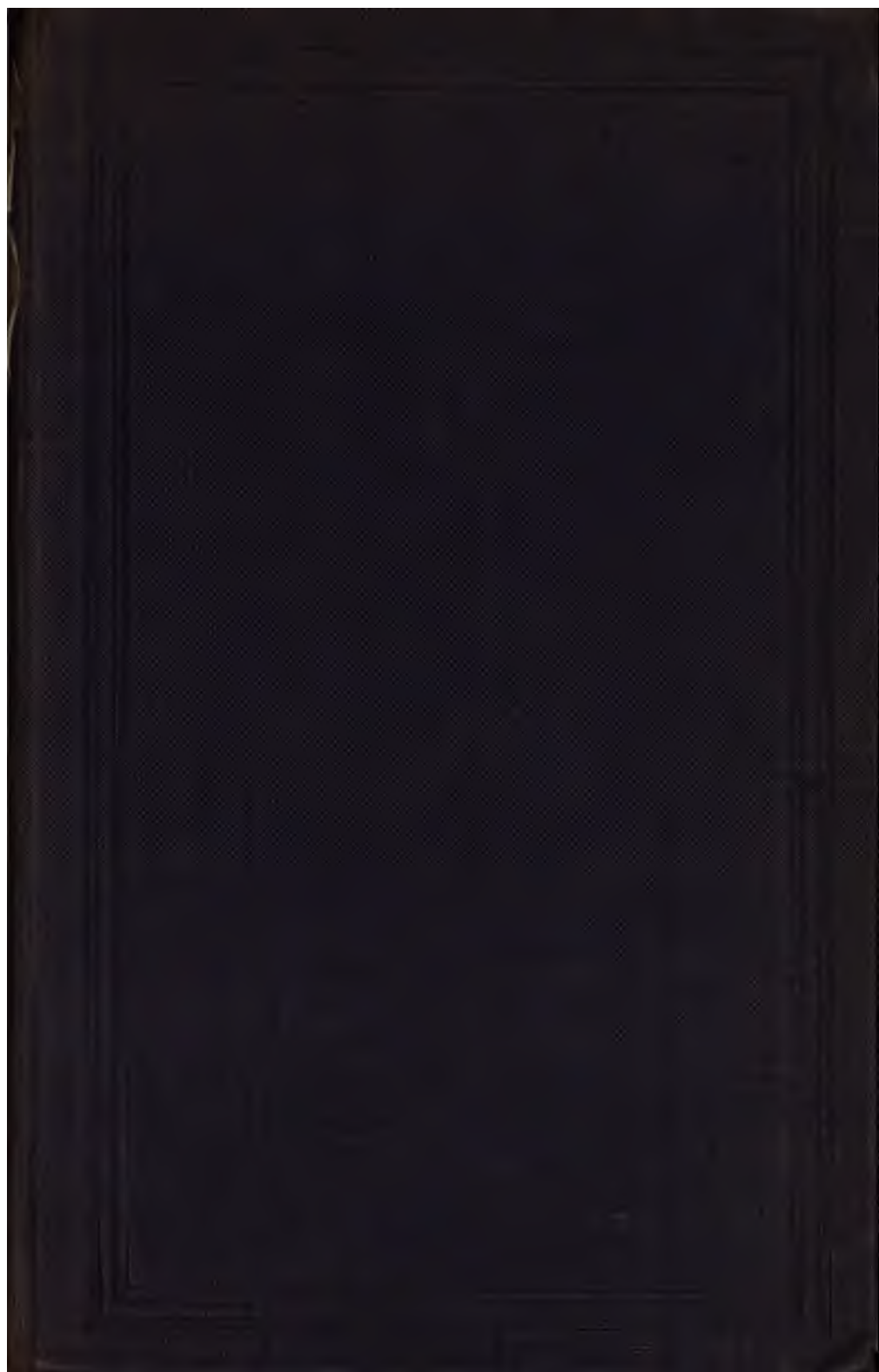
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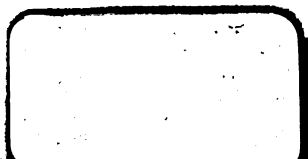
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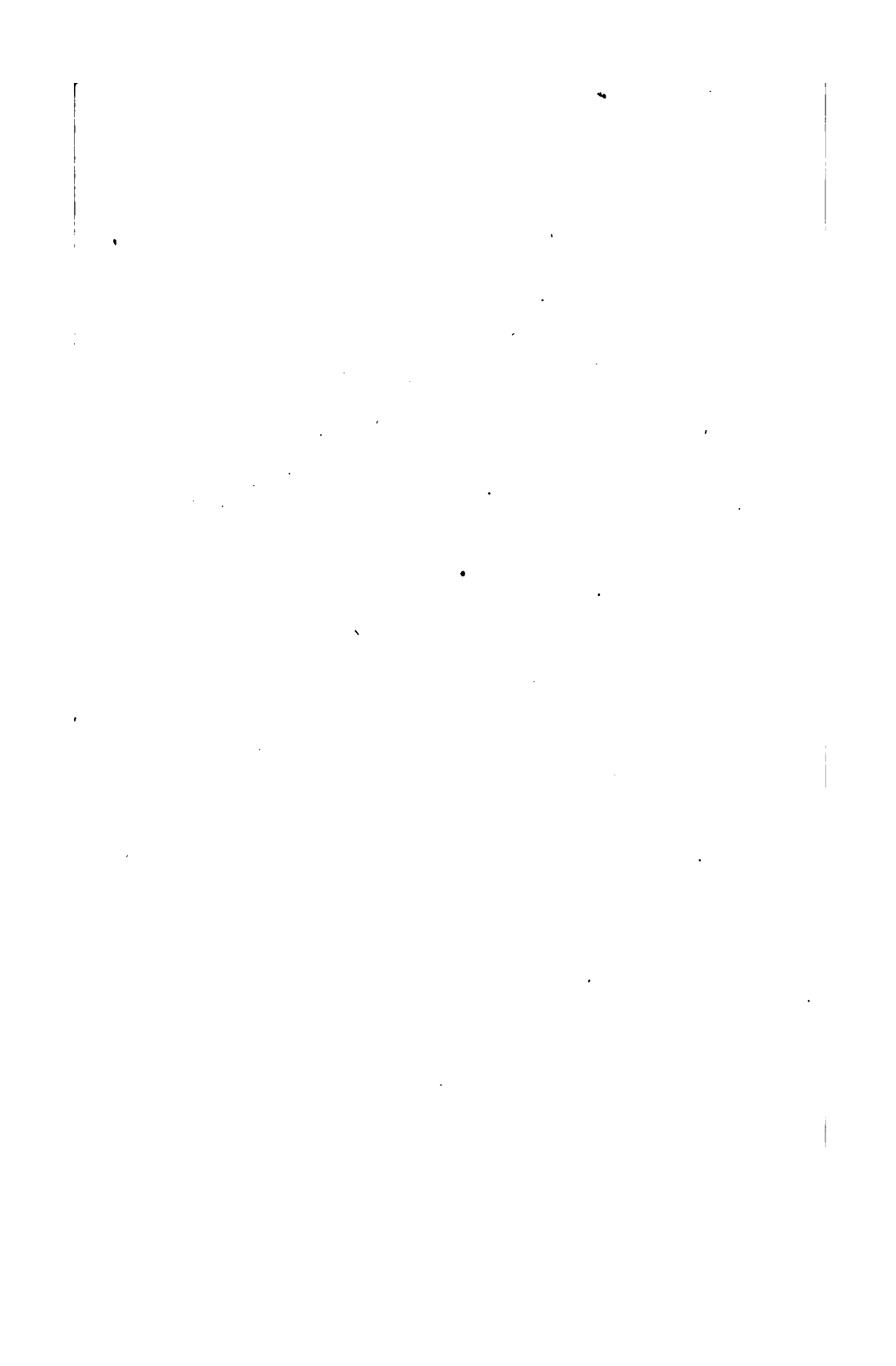




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THE
YOUTH AND WOMANHOOD
OF
HELEN TYRREL.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

BRAMPTON RECTORY;

OR, THE LESSON OF LIFE.

Second Edition, revised

COMPTON MERIVALE:

ANOTHER LEAF FROM THE LESSON OF LIFE.

A Companion Volume

THE
YOUTH AND WOMANHOOD
OF
HELEN TYRREL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
'BRAMPTON RECTORY,' 'COMPTON MERIVALE,'
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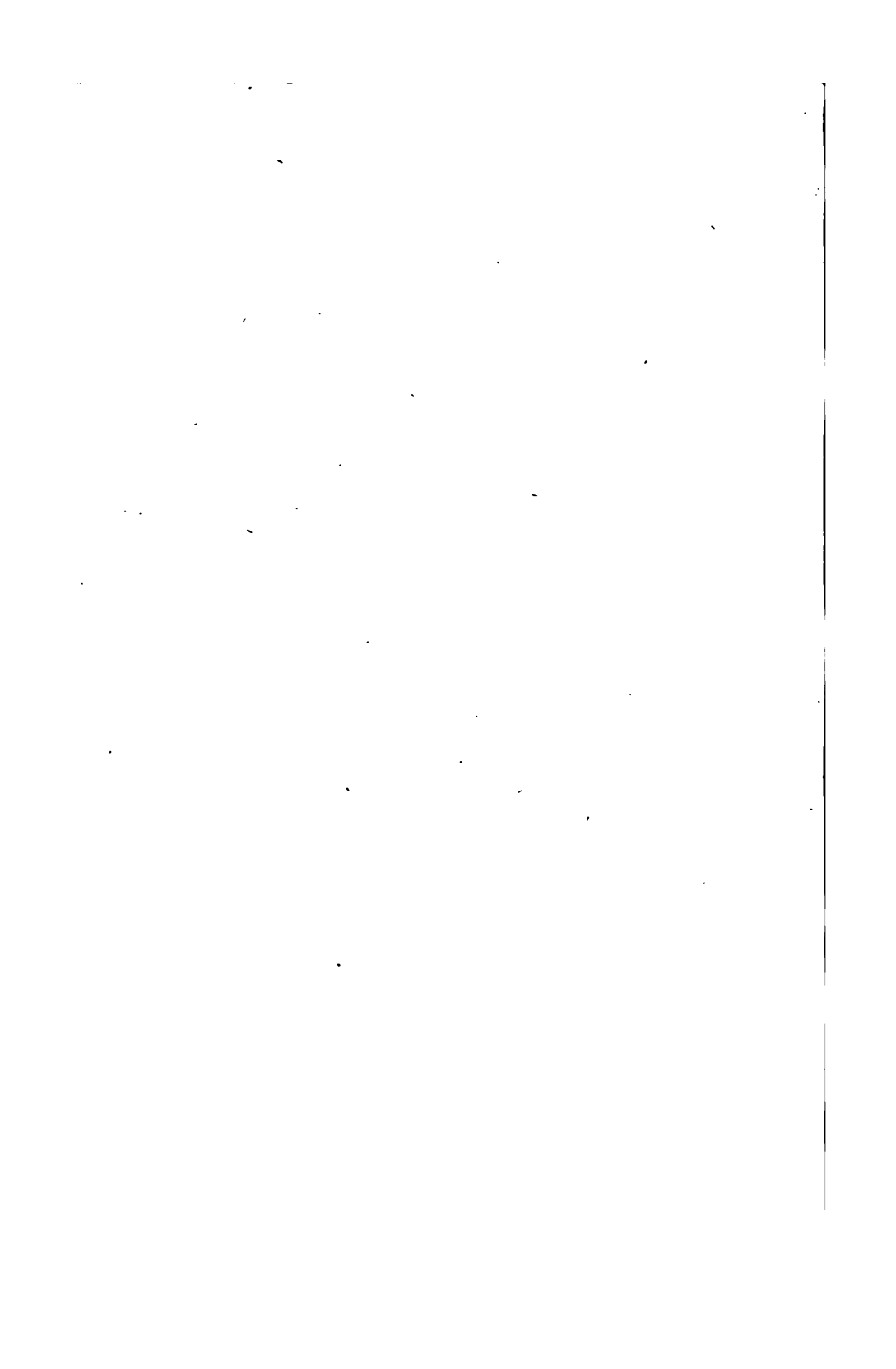
'I held it truth, with one who sings
To one clear harp in various tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.'

In Memoriam.



LONDON:
JOHN W. PARKER AND SON, WEST STRAND.
MDCCCLIV.

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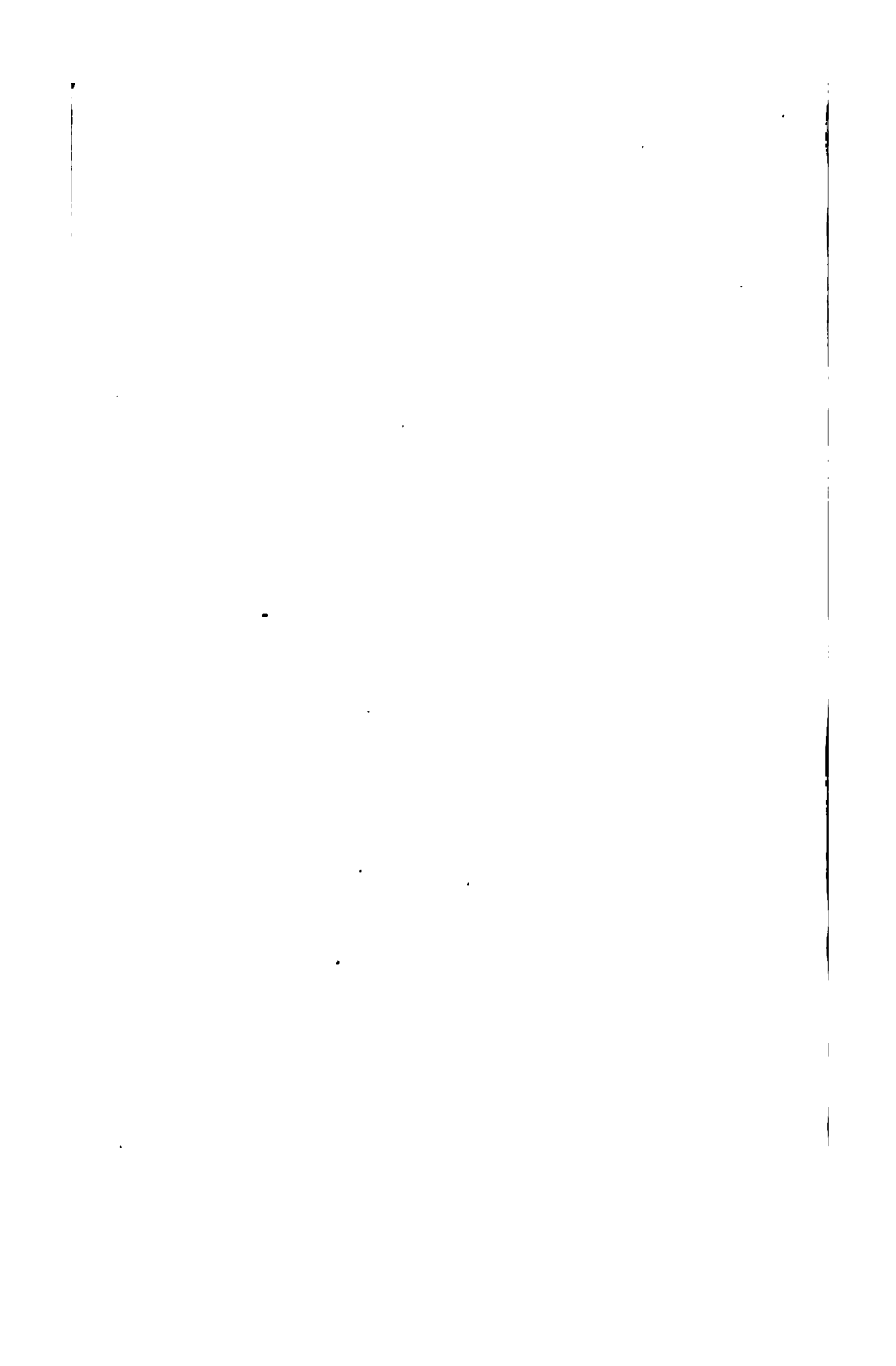


TO THE MEMORY
OF
FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON,
SOMETIME MINISTER OF
TRINITY CHAPEL, BRIGHTON,
THESE PAGES ARE HUMBLY DEDICATED
BY ONE
TO WHOM HIS TEACHING WAS
LIGHT IN DARKNESS, RELIEF IN SORROW,
AND THE
IMPULSE TO A HIGHER LIFE.



CONTENTS.

PAGE	PAGE
HELEN'S YOUTH	1
HELEN'S WOMANHOOD	17
NEW TEACHINGS	23
ANXIETY	36
DEPENDENCY.	42
ARKS IN THE HORIZON	49
ALLEL CASE EXAMINED	59
ATION.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE FALL	
ITS EFFECTS	73
ION.—REDEMPTION	90
NATURE	106
ICE	117
CHES AND VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES	131
INVALID	147
.	164
N	151
WOMAN OF A CERTAIN AGE' 199	
E	216
.	245



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. HELEN'S YOUTH	1
II. HELEN'S WOMANHOOD	17
III. NEW TEACHINGS	23
IV. ANXIETY	36
V. DESPONDENCY.	42
VI. STREAKS IN THE HORIZON	49
VII. A PARALLEL CASE EXAMINED	59
VIII. CONVERSATION.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE FALL AND ITS EFFECTS	73
IX. CONVERSATION.—REDEMPTION	90
X. A NEW CREATURE	106
XI. PARTING ADVICE	117
XII. NATIONAL CHURCHES AND VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES	131
XIII. TRIALS OF AN INVALID	147
XIV. THE SEQUEL	164
XV. FEMALE EDUCATION	181
XVI. HELEN—A 'SINGLE WOMAN OF A CERTAIN AGE'	199
XVII. SYMPTOMS OF CHANGE	216
XVIII. HELEN'S MARRIED LIFE	245

THE
YOUTH AND WOMANHOOD
OF
HELEN TYRREL.

CHAPTER I.

HELEN'S YOUTH.

The bridal is over, the guests are all gone,
The bride's only sister sits weeping alone;
The wreath of white roses is torn from her brow,
And the heart of the bridesmaid is desolate now.

THE bells of the little church of Milnwood had rung their last peal, and the ringers were putting on their coats, preparatory to retiring to the Black Horse, to enjoy their suppers and drink out the money distributed to them by the Squire, who had that morning given away his second daughter in marriage. The last carriages of the guests had driven from the Lodge, and twilight was beginning to close in, when Helen Tyrrel wearily sought her chamber, and sat down to watch the rising of a September moon—and to weep.

It was not, indeed, to feelings such as those expressed in the little poem quoted above that her tears were due. It was not that she thought 'o'er

each pleasure, each pain, that endeared the cherished companion of earlier years;’ between her and the sister who had that day left her maiden home there had been little community in feeling. Nor was there any of that trembling anxiety, that fearing for the future of the beloved one, which wrings the hearts of relatives on some bridal days. The Rev. Charles Mordaunt, whose wife Julia Tyrrel had now become, was in fortune, position, and character unexceptionable. The tears of Helen must be traced to a deeper source, to unveil which we must look a little backwards.

Helen Tyrrel was the eldest child of Graham Tyrrel, Esq., of Milnwood, a village near the market-town of Hanbury, in H——shire.

In early youth she had been the pet and prodigy of her family. ‘Miss Helen, bless her heart, is the best child as ever was; she wants no minding, give her but a book, and where you leave her there you find her,’ was the somewhat interested panegyric of the nurse. ‘I have no fault to find with Miss Tyrrel; she is a very good girl at her lessons,’ was the guarded admission of the governess. ‘Why can’t you take a book, and amuse yourself as Helen does?’ was the occasional expostulation of mamma, when out of patience with the restlessness of Julia and her brothers.

At school as at home she was highly in favour. She was first in all her classes,—she carried off prizes,—she won the notice and good will of masters,—she was held up by her instructress as a model, and would have infallibly been hated by her companions

as a rival, had not her good-nature and constant readiness to find thoughts or words for stranded essay-writers, with other good offices of the kind, made her schoolfellows willing to bear with her superiority. Nor was she by any means so vain and conceited as she might have been. She really had an intense love of study; she read and learned, not *merely* to be considered the cleverest girl in the school, but because it was a want of her nature; and though occasionally she surveyed with some complacency the extent of her acquirements, the consciousness of how much there was yet to be attained kept her from inordinate self-gratulation. She remained at school till she was eighteen, to give time for Julia (about a year and a half her junior) to complete her education, and leave at the same time. This protraction of the school period was no grief to Helen; on the contrary, the last year at school, in which she was admitted to much of her governess' society and favour, was peculiarly happy and profitable. That lady conversed with her frequently, especially as the time of her removal drew near,—commented on the great advantages she would reap through life from the diligence she had manifested at school,—exhorted her to persevere in a plan of study which she marked out for her, and finally dismissed her with high honours, as one of the most creditable pupils she had ever had. Julia, who left at the same time, was quite content to come off without any peculiar mark of blame. She was by no means dull; on the contrary, she had quick wit and facility in learning

whatever she chose; but she cared little for reading and knowledge for its own sake, and was chiefly anxious to acquire what made most show.

And now Helen was introduced into a world which she of course expected would be governed by the same opinions, ruled by the same maxims as the world of Clifton Grove; in which what had been valued there would still have the pre-eminence,—what had been condemned as worthless there would still be neglected. But she was woefully mistaken.

Mr. and Mrs. Tyrrel had indeed always shown great zeal for the improvement of their children. Helen and Julia had constantly been reminded of the great expense which was being incurred to give them every possible advantage, and had been urgently enjoined to make the best of their time. Mrs. Tyrrel had listened with complacency to the praises bestowed by Mrs. Elford on Helen's promising talents and eagerness to learn, and had been in the habit of detailing them to her acquaintance, often remarking how few young persons of Helen's standing were equally well-informed. Helen naturally, therefore, looked forward to a home in which she should be appreciated in proportion to the pains she had taken to deserve her parents' good opinion. But it was not long before she discovered, to her utter perplexity, that the very qualities which had been her crown of honour at school, nay, which had been held forth by her instructress as giving the promise of future usefulness and happiness, were at home either matter of bare endurance or of positive annoyance.

‘Where is Helen? What, reading still!’ would be the frequent exclamation of Mrs. Tyrrel, followed up, when the lost one was found, with a sort of irritated remonstrance: ‘I wish to goodness you could learn from what you read that there is ‘a time for everything.’’

‘A time for everything.’ This was indeed a favourite citation at Milnwood; but Helen never could discover what was the permitted and sanctioned time for following out the long meditated plan of study concocted under the eye of Mrs. Elford. Either there were visitors, or needlework, or music, or shopping, or the children really could not be expected to be so very quiet, or it was very unsociable for one in a family to be reading when others were talking; and there really were proper times and places for everything.

Helen tried to find at least the proper place in her own room; but neither here could she be allowed to be undisturbed. The room was shared with Julia, and was the scene of innumerable consultations upon dressing and dress making. Besides, Milnwood was a cold place, the house large and airy, and Helen could not sit long without a fire now that summer was gone. Nor, if she was long absent from the sitting-room, did she escape inquiry and remonstrance from her mother; ‘What have you been doing, Helen? I do not approve of young girls idling away their time in their bedrooms.’

‘I have been reading, mamma.’

‘Oh, have you; well, reading is all very right and

proper, but I wish you would remember there are other things to be done besides reading.'

Helen tried to take her books out of doors, but if she was within sight of the house she was sure to be called in every now and then for some trifle; if she was out of sight—and there was a favourite meadow where she could pace up and down unobserved—she was liable to be reproved, on the ground that it had such a strange look for a girl to be reading out of doors in lonely places; she must beware of forming eccentric and recluse habits, they were always most disadvantageous to young people.

The fact was, Mrs. Tyrrel had failed to adapt her means to her end. She had taken a certain pride in the attainments of her daughter, in her reputation for talent, &c., just because this end had not been distinctly present to her whilst she was yet at school, and she liked the idea of having a clever child; but now that the serious business of life was to commence, she began to discover that the views and tastes which had been encouraged in Helen were quite irrelevant to the end she had in view, and the discovery rather fretted her, and led to vague attempts to check the mischief.

Helen, in the meantime, was perplexed and discouraged by the inconsistencies which were manifesting themselves. She could not understand why, if, as she had been taught, her school life was to be a preparation for her home life, the very habits and pursuits which had been commended at school should be rebuked at home. She had heard much from Mrs. Elford of the bearing which the attain-

ment of knowledge would have on her future happiness and usefulness, but as far as she could yet see, what she had attained seemed rather to stand in the way both of the one and the other. Though she had been told again and again by Mrs. Elford that what she had as yet learned was rather a preparation for further knowledge, and had heard much of the folly of girls who throw aside all their books when they leave school, she had also been warned by her friend that domestic duties were also of importance, and she would have been willing to learn any of the household arts if her mother had encouraged such lore, but Mrs. Tyrrel disapproved of all her attempts. She had a sufficient staff of servants, and disliked all meddling with them or their works; and if ever she employed her girls in anything, it was something so trifling that it brought with it the discouraging feeling that it might just as well have been done by any one else.

Helen often thought over in her way what could have been the end of her education? *why* she had been encouraged to learn? what sort of a person she had been expected to become? in short, what was the real business of life as regarded herself? It was long before she could get an answer to these questions; but when the time came that she and Julia were to be introduced into company, the riddle was solved. The ordinary tone of conversation at length convinced her that in the estimation of all those with whom she had to do, the object of all a young lady's advantages, natural or acquired,

was *success* in society,—that is to say, present admiration, early and wealthy marriage.

With this discovery came almost simultaneously another, namely, that for this kind of success she was by nature and education unfitted. Nor could she help blaming Mrs. Elford for having in some degree misled her. She had always been taught that beauty was a thing of very little consequence; that to be good and sensible was far better than to be handsome. All eager talking about dress and appearance, all anxiety on such points, had been discouraged at school. What could this mean? She now heard and saw that beauty was of the very first consideration; that a pretty girl, however uninformed, was sure to meet with admirers, and might very likely gain the affections of some agreeable man, and have a happy lot, whilst a plain face, however combined with sense and goodness, generally stamped its owner as one neglected in youth and solitary through life. What, then, could equal beauty in its influence on happiness? She could not help thinking there might be somewhere those who would value beauty of mind, but in the circle of her acquaintances the only rival to the person seemed to be the purse.

This personal requisite for success Helen felt that she did not possess. She was not unpleasing in appearance; she had a ladylike figure, and her hair and eyes were good, but she had no brilliancy of complexion, and her countenance, though intelligent, was rather too thoughtful for her years. When well-dressed, she might be considered rather a fine girl; but she had a great propensity to spend her

allowance in books, and her mechanical ingenuity did not aid her to make the most of a scanty toilette.

Julia, on the contrary, was a very pretty, lively girl, always nicely dressed and made the most of. She had, moreover, a great advantage over her sister in manner. She had not her intellectual tastes, but she was not without a knowledge of literary subjects, and she had a much greater readiness in general conversation than the shy, timid Helen. She would talk with the grave or the gay, and make herself agreeable to all for a time. She was always on good terms with herself, and seldom troubled with any doubts as to pleasing.

Poor Helen, on the other hand, was as anxious to please as her sister, but much more doubtful of her powers; and her self-consciousness was nervously increased by the injudicious management of her mother, who sadly defeated her own end by continual comments on her daughter's manners. Seldom did the poor girl go into company without being subjected afterwards to a revision of all her sayings and doings. 'Helen, how very awkwardly you came into the room last night; every eye was upon you when you stumbled against that chair.'

'What *were* you talking of at dinner to Mr. Simpson? Really, I wish you could recollect that every one is not as much taken up with books as yourself. I dare say he thought you very pedantic and absurd.'

'I really believe, Helen, you never opened your lips once yesterday at supper, and when I looked

at you, you began to talk indeed, but you stammered and blushed, and answered Mr. Jackson's questions all wrong. I overheard Mrs. Mitchell say to her husband, 'Well, if Helen Tyrrel is a specimen of clever girls, give me stupid ones.'

Julia, too, who had a certain love of mischief, and was not very particular as to the feelings of those with whom she amused herself, added to the general persecution in a way which greatly disconcerted Helen. If she chanced in company to catch her sister's voice in anything like earnest discussion, she would call attention to her. 'Hark at Helen! Do you hear how eloquent she is? Why, Helen, my dear, what has come over you?' And by these foolish sallies she never failed to flush Helen's cheeks with crimson, and to seal up her lips in silence.

By methods such as these, society was rendered so irksome and distasteful to Helen, that she tried as much as possible to evade going into company. Nor was much ingenuity required for this purpose; for while on the one hand the narrow circle of Hanbury did not offer much variety, on the other, the keeping up intercourse with the more distant neighbourhood was attended with many difficulties.

Mr. Tyrrel was not a rich man. He had been left by his father with an inheritance large enough to give him an excellent vantage ground in a profession, but too small to supersede the necessity of personal exertion. He had been entered at the bar, and continued to study for it for some time; but getting weary and disgusted, he found out that

London did not agree with his health, retired into the country, and lived for some time as an idle man. Some further property coming to him, on the death of a brother, he married, purchased a small estate near the town of Hanbury, in H—shire, and henceforth devoted himself to shooting, fishing, and the like unproductive pursuits. But the income which had sufficed for a liberal style of living whilst Mr. Tyrrel's children were young, fell rather short when those children (four girls and two boys) had to be educated and advanced in life, especially as Mr. Tyrrel, in the earlier years of his marriage, had amused himself, at a considerable outlay, in converting an old-fashioned mansion, half-way between manor and farm house, into a handsome modern residence, dignified with the name of Milnwood Lodge.

The village of Milnwood consisted of a church, a little inn, a blacksmith's shop, a few cottages, and four good houses, one of which was the Vicarage, one the Lodge, one the Grange, and one undistinguished by any peculiar name. Four good families in these houses might have made a pleasant little knot of friends; but the rector was old and a widower, the Grange was owned by a family who lived abroad, and the other house was inhabited by a person of doubtful class and character. The neighbourhood afforded several families with whom the Tyrrels were on visiting terms; but they were at distances not to be reached comfortably except with the aid of a close carriage, and as Mr. Tyrrell had been obliged to

part with his horses, whilst the expenses of his sons' education were going on, invitations to country neighbours were sparingly accepted. On Hanbury their chief dependence lay, and though the society there was not very choice, still Julia at least considered it preferable to utter seclusion. But even Hanbury parties were not attended without difficulty. The town was too distant for walking, or for pony carriages in the evening; and flies or post horses were expensive. Mrs. Tyrrel had a widowed sister, Mrs. Stevens, living in Hanbury, who was a convenient ally on these occasions. If any little evening party, concert, or lecture, was to take place, not of sufficient importance to justify much expense, Mrs. Stevens could generally give a bed to one at least of her nieces; and it was most usually Julia who taxed her hospitality. 'We must not encroach upon my aunt too much,' Julia would say; 'and I dare say, Helen, you do not care about going.' In the majority of cases Helen did *not*, and it became a sort of understood thing, that when both could not go she was to stay at home.

This state of things continued, with tolerable uniformity, till Helen was nearly four-and-twenty. Julia had in that time had many flirtations, but they had hitherto ended in nothing. Helen had never been distinguished by any peculiar attention, nor had she seen any one from whom for a moment she could wish to receive it.

At last, one morning Mr. Tyrrel, who, in his easy, indolent way, was rather fond of his eldest

daughter, announced to his wife that he had invited a young man to dine with them the next day; adding: 'Now, Helen, you must put on your best behaviour. Charles Mordaunt is just the sort of fellow for you,—very clever, so his uncle tells me; and will talk with you as long as you please about all the new books. I told him that I thought you could match him in that way, if any one could.'

Helen, though rather disconcerted at being commended to a stranger's notice in this fashion, certainly looked forward with some pleasure to the prospect of conversation more to her taste than that she was generally in the habit of listening to.

Mr. Charles Mordaunt arrived in company with his uncle, Mr. Nelson, the vicar of Milnwood, with whom he was reading for orders. His appearance did not quite correspond with Helen's idea of a studious, intellectual man. He was rather good-looking, dressed faultlessly, and had a touch of conceit in his manner and voice. Mr. Tyrrel introduced him rather particularly to Helen, saying, 'You'll find my daughter as great a reader as yourself, Mr. Mordaunt.' The suppressed smile which curled Mr. Mordaunt's lip did not escape Helen, nor did it add to the ease of her manner when she found herself seated by him at table, with Julia opposite, attentively watching them. Mr. Mordaunt seemed for some minutes searching his memory for suitable topics of conversation, and Helen found it impossible to help him out. At last, he cautiously asked her whether she had read the last new novel? She had not.

‘Did she find it difficult to procure books at Hanbury?’

‘Rather so.’

‘Had she read anything interesting lately?’

She mentioned several works, and a little discussion of their merits took place. Then some recent articles in the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* were brought forward, and Helen, forgetting herself, was talking freely and energetically on the influence of criticism on general taste, when—the name of Sir Walter Scott being mentioned—Julia leant over the table, and asked Mr. Mordaunt which of Scott’s novels was his favourite? To a question so commonplace from an ordinary girl he might not perhaps have deigned more than a brief reply; but Julia was so pretty, and had such a winning manner, and was so easily governed by his taste, that he skimmed with her from one of the *Waverley* characters to another, admiring the heroines, laughing at the bores, till he led her on to the work of Sir Walter’s great successor—the *Pickwick Papers*, just then making their appearance. And here he had a full field for the display of his powers. The *Pickwick Papers* had not reached Milnwood. He had to describe them—to cite passages, scenes, characters,—to defend the wit from his uncle, who feared it might be of immoral tendency; and from Mrs. Tyrrel, who thought it low. Helen listened attentively; she had not quite made up her mind as to the true value of humorous writing. But Julia was gained instantly, declared she should not rest till she had

seen Pickwick, and received a promise from Mr. Mordaunt to bring her such of the numbers as were out.

When the gentlemen came into the drawing-room in the evening, Helen, finding herself near Mr. Mordaunt, began to moot the question of the moral utility of Wit and Humour, when Julia, seated at the piano, at the instance of Mr. Nelson, flung back her sunny curls, and began to sing the ballad of 'Lochinvar.' Mr. Mordaunt moved to her side, and was soon prevailed on to take a second in a duet. Helen sat down to backgammon with Mr. Nelson.

'You see, my dear,' said Mrs. Tyrrel to her husband, 'there is no use in trying to push Helen forward. She does not know how to use her opportunities.'

'Well, she must take her chance, and be an old maid, if she prefers it,' said her father.

The intimacy begun that evening between Mr. Mordaunt and Julia Tyrrel was improved from time to time during his stay at the Vicarage, and its result, in rather more than a year from that time, was the marriage recorded at the commencement of this chapter.

It may now not unnaturally be inferred that Helen's tears on that occasion sprung from disappointed affection; that the sinking of heart which she experienced when she gained her room, was the giving way of feelings nerved to endure the pang of seeing one whom she could have loved unite his fate to another. Nothing of the sort.

She early discovered that Charles Mordaunt by no means possessed the qualities which could attract her regard. He was clever, but superficial ; good-natured and well-intentioned, but wanting in high aims and enthusiasm of character ; and his sacred profession, in Helen's view, made these defects lamentable and inexcusable. She was on good terms with him as an intended brother-in-law, but she never for an instant regretted that she had not been the object of his choice. No ; her depression had another origin. It was the reflection of the disappointment she saw respecting her in her parents—especially in her mother's every look and word. Somehow or other, the promise of her youth had failed. Her much-praised talents and acquirements had apparently done her no good. At five-and-twenty she was the neglected, the solitary one of her family and acquaintance, and she had a foreboding that so it would ever be. She did not often think about it, but in that hour of over-taxed spirits it came upon her with singular force, and the tears she wept were bitter.

CHAPTER II.

HELEN'S WOMANHOOD.

Ein unnütz Leben ist ein früher Tod.

GOETHE'S *Iphigenie auf Tauris*.

THE marriage of one sister is sometimes an advantage to a whole family, introducing them to fresh society, and opening to them fresh avenues to improvement and enjoyment. But it was otherwise with the marriage of Julia Tyrrel.

The Mordaunts went to reside in London, where Charles acted as curate to his father, the incumbent of a well-endowed benefice in the city. The weekly duty being exceedingly light, Mr. Mordaunt, who had a liberal allowance from his father, was enabled to live very comfortably at Hampstead, going into London for his one service on the Sunday, and spending his time as he pleased the rest of the week.

Satisfied with her husband, with his family, with her pretty house and furniture, with her large circle of acquaintance, Julia felt little need of her sister's society, and it was not till the birth of her first child that Helen was summoned to share for a time the advantages of her new home. This visit, which continued till Julia was quite recovered from her confinement, was not repeated

very quickly, and in the meantime other causes were springing up to render it undesirable.

Nothing has as yet been said of Helen's religious culture. In truth, it had been but meagre. To say a prayer night and morning, to repeat the catechism, to read a chapter on Sundays, to go to church, where nothing was heard that could stir the youthful mind, this had been the routine of home. Even Mrs. Elford added but little to this. She was of the Edgeworth school. Prudence, utility, present reward, had pointed her most earnest exhortations; and on these motives, preserved from utter selfishness by a kindly disposition, and from utter worldliness by some vague sentiment of religious reverence, Helen had hitherto shaped her course. She had never known the touch of that potent magnet by which the mind of the young is sometimes irresistibly drawn to a spiritual world, the death of one beloved. The family circle was as yet unbroken; nor had any one member of that family so called out her tenderest affections as to render the bare possibility of removal a shade upon present sunshine. But in that hour of sadness and depression which followed her sister's bridal, thoughts of a different kind from those which had at first called up her tears, imperceptibly stole across her spirit. 'Can this be life? Is this all I was meant for? Have I no higher responsibilities? And then, what a meanness it is? Oh, that I had a friend! Some one who understood me. Some one to whom I could open my heart! Do not some find God such a friend?

Is that possible? Cannot I at least try? She knelt down, and for the first time in her life really prayed simply for divine guidance, pity, and help. She knew not how, but she arose relieved and comforted.

From that time Helen began to look upon religion as something real; not as a mere tax which we must pay to our Maker for leave to enjoy His gifts, but as something which *might* take the highest ground of life.

To have God for her friend, to be secure of his favour and assistance, to pray, and hope that her prayers would be answered, was now the great want of her soul, but her ideas of the way in which this relation might be formed were exceedingly vague. She determined at least to be watchful over her conduct, to avoid everything which she knew to be wrong, to do all the good in her power, and to be punctual in what she considered especially religious duties.

She had received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper a few times in the years which had intervened since her confirmation, but it had always seemed to her something awful and mysterious, and she had avoided it as much as possible. She now determined to become a regular communicant, hoping by this means especially to establish a connexion between herself and God. But she was not long before she began to be disturbed by the great discrepancy between her feelings and those in the Communion service, in which the confessions and prayers, from being less familiar to her than those

in other parts of the service, struck her more forcibly. Do what she would, she could not diminish or account for this discrepancy, and she had increasing doubts whether by receiving in a state of mind so unlike what seemed to be required, she might not be eating and drinking her own condemnation.

She had no friend to whom to apply for assistance, nor did the books which she read seem to go to the root of the difficulty.

As yet Hanbury had been but little stirred by religious excitement. Dr. Winter, the incumbent of its single parish, had held an even course, moral, respectable, watchful over the dignity of the church, but little concerned for its efficiency. Mr. Nelson, the rector of Milnwood, with less attention to clerical etiquette, was even less anxious about clerical duty. And so Hanbury and its satellite slumbered in a quiet formality.

But about a year before Julia's marriage, Mrs. Pembroke, the widow of one of the deceased county members, came to settle in the immediate vicinity of the town, at her dower-house of Hanbury Place.

Mrs. Pembroke had been accustomed to move in fashionable circles, but since the death of her husband, she had become, as was generally said, very serious. She had been a widow several years, but until the marriage of her eldest son, she had continued to reside at Pembroke Hall, where she had been the centre of a religious, as she had once been of a gay and worldly society. On taking possession

of Hanbury Place, she at once decided that there must be a new church built. A piece of ground was selected close to her own house, which was situated a little beyond the northern extremity of the town, a church was erected and endowed chiefly at her expense, for her fortune was ample, and in about two years from her arrival, the Rev. Eustace Seymour commenced his ministry at the new church of St. Mark, which was soon filled to overflowing.

Mr. Seymour had not preached many Sundays, before the fame of his eloquence, his energy, his evangelical doctrine, reached Milnwood. Every one, indeed, within a reasonable distance, made a point of hearing him at least once, and the Tyrrels went amongst the rest of their neighbours. But *once* did not satisfy Helen. She was now eagerly asking 'Who will show us any good?' and here something was held forth not merely as 'good,' but as the one thing needful. She must 'prove it,' and if good she found it, 'hold it fast.' She had, of course, not lived so long without hearing of evangelical preachers and evangelical professors, but she had always regarded them with a dislike, as a kind of dissenters. But in her present state of mind, these prejudices had lost their power; besides, there was a *prestige* about Mr. Seymour, and his patroness, Mrs. Pembroke, which effectually dispelled all fears of low sectarianism.

Helen did not gain much light from the first few sermons she heard from Mr. Seymour. His phraseology was new to her, and the subjects seemed

all addressed to a sort of initiated class, 'believers,' with whom she doubted if she had anything in common. At last he gave notice that on the following Sunday evening, he should commence a course of sermons to the 'unconverted,' in which he should endeavour to set forth the 'condition of man,' and the 'plan of salvation.' These sermons Helen felt she must at all risks attend. It was rather difficult to do so, for it was now late in the autumn, and the distance to St. Mark's was nearly two miles by the road, whilst a shorter cut across the fields was too lonely for dark evenings. By the help, however, of her aunt's kindness, Helen accomplished her object, not indeed without some opposition from Mrs. Tyrrel, who thought it very strange that she should want to attend a religious service which entailed the inconvenience of sleeping from home.

CHAPTER III.

NEW TEACHINGS.

Durant ces huit siècles nous n'avons jamais vu la religion d'accord avec cette révélation fondamentale que Dieu a gravée dans notre conscience.

SISMONDI, *Histoire des Français*.

THE first sermon in Mr. Seymour's course was on Man's State by Nature. This he characterized in the broadest terms as one of utter ruin.

First, he affirmed that in consequence of Adam's transgression all his descendants, irrespective of character and antecedent to any possible sin, were under the wrath and curse of God. In Adam all die—we are all by nature children of wrath. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners—these were the principal Scripture proofs.

This appeared to Helen an astounding doctrine, and contrary to all her ideas of justice; but the thought had scarcely crossed her mind when Mr. Seymour anticipated the objection, and sought to meet it by analogies from human laws of attainder, summing up with the remark that if any were yet unconvinced, they must remember that God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.

But further, he went on to say all mankind inherited a sinful nature, which was indeed part of

the penalty denounced upon our first parents. Their nature was cursed, like the ground, and brought forth spontaneously nothing but evil. With great energy and variety of expression, he insisted that man's heart—not in one particular race or generation, but always, and in every individual—was *evil*, and *only* evil, and *that continually*; incapable of thinking a good thought, much less of originating any good deed. Helen hardly recognised this description as belonging either to herself or to any one she knew. But here again Mr. Seymour anticipated her hesitancy, and explained that there were indeed amongst unconverted men some things which looked like goodness, such as kindness, honesty, generosity, domestic affection, and so on; but inasmuch as they are only done from natural principles, and not out of obedience to God, they were but splendid sins.

It seemed to Helen that the absence of the highest motive might render a good action *defective*, but could not change it into evil.

But he went on to say that whatever there might be of moral virtue in such men, it only respected their relations to each other; with regard to God there was nothing but enmity. Every unconverted sinner, he said, hates God, and the more he knows of him, the more he hates him.

Helen could not plead guilty to this indictment, for if she had at one time been conscious of a secret dread and hanging back from God, at other times she had felt an attraction towards him.

‘This sinful nature,’ Mr. Seymour added, ‘was a just object of abhorrence of God, and for this, man, setting aside all other considerations, is under the Divine wrath.’

This again struck Helen as hard, since a creature may be shunned as mischievous, but hardly abhorred as wicked for possessing an evil nature.

Thirdly, it was stated that man is under the curse of God’s law, for acting out this evil and corrupt nature in positive sins. And here Mr. Seymour said it might be objected that it was unjust and unreasonable to give a law which it was impossible that men should keep; but he argued that the holy and just law of God could not be altered or lowered one tittle because men had made themselves vile.

Helen again felt a little bewildered. ‘How,’ she could not help thinking, ‘can those who are born with a totally depraved nature, be said to have made themselves vile?’ And again she thought, ‘Was it not one ingredient of the justice of a law, that it should be suited to the circumstances of those to whom it is addressed?’ But she paid great attention to his description of the Divine law, and of the way in which it is broken: hoping to gain a definite idea of what he really included under the general name of sin. She was not, however, much enlightened, for nothing Mr. Seymour said seemed to come home to her conscience. He either dwelt on spiritual deficiencies—wandering in prayer—self-righteousness, or the like; or else adduced the coarser forms of evil, swearing—sabbath-breaking,

the lusts of the flesh, &c. But the great sin of all, he said, was ingratitude to God,—want of love to him. 'Every hour, every minute,' he said, 'in which you have not loved Him with all your heart and all your soul has sent in its account to Heaven against your soul; and for every such sin, for every cold, rebellious, or trifling thought, you deserve eternal punishment.'

But what gratitude, what love, Helen secretly asked, could be expected from a being born in such a condition? How could he thank God for his creation, when it would seem to have been better for him never to have been born?

'With this triple chain then,' said Mr. Seymour, summing up, 'is man bound—the chain of Adam's sin—the chain of his own sinful nature—the chain of his own actual transgressions of the law. How shall he escape everlasting destruction? He is at once the child of a condemned and accursed race—he is a leper dying of a mortal and shameful disease—he is a criminal condemned for actual crime. And this is the condition of every one here present, of the most moral, the most amiable; the most apparently religious of you are unconverted, if you have not seen and acknowledged the justice of your doom, bewailed your original and actual sins, and fled for refuge to the salvation provided in the Gospel.'

'Do you believe all this, my dear?' said Mrs. Stevens to her niece, as they left the church together.

'I don't know, Aunt; I never heard things stated

exactly in this way before; but Mr. Seymour seems so positive, and quotes so much Scripture, that I can hardly dare to suppose he is mistaken.'

'Well, I can only say if this is religion, it is a very shocking thing. But we will hear what he has to say next Sunday.'

The next sermon was on *Man's future destiny considered irrespective of the Gospel*. This was described to be eternal and intolerable misery both of body and soul. Mr. Seymour spared no material image: a scorpion writhing in eternal flames—a worm crushed beneath a mass of stone, yet retaining sensation—a soul eternally a prey to the agonies of remorse (what could be the ground of remorse, thought Helen, since by no possibility the doom could have been prevented); and this fearful misery, he carefully reiterated, was the meed of even the *smallest* transgression. Not the *least* sin, he said, but deserved eternal punishment; for not the least sin could be expiated but by the blood of Christ. Pale with excitement he left the pulpit; pale also, Helen left the church, sick at heart, yet determined to persevere through the course.

In the third sermon, Mr. Seymour said, that having been compelled by duty to set before them the awful subject of man's ruin, he now joyfully turned to a different subject. For this dreadful state of things a remedy had been devised; and it was now his blessed privilege to lay before them the scheme of man's salvation. The text (he it observed) was: 'Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help!' He dwelt first on the obstacles which stood

in the way of man's release. That the law of God could not be defrauded of its due—that it was impossible the sinner should be permitted to escape until he had paid the uttermost farthing—that the justice and mercy of God were at issue, the one attribute calling for the destruction of man, the other pleading to spare him. This he supported by the celebrated lines of Milton :

Die he or justice must, unless for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.

In this dilemma, Mr. Seymour continued, a voice was heard crying, ' Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.' This ransom was the Son of God himself, who should descend from heaven and take our nature upon him—that on him might be laid the sins of the whole world—sins original—sins of nature—sins of actual commission. This was done, and on the Cross he paid the debt of suffering due to all, draining to the very dregs the cup of Divine wrath. This last point, of Christ being as the sinner's substitute the object of the wrath of God, was dwelt on with especial emphasis; and the sermon was wound up with a fervid commendation of the riches of Divine mercy, as exhibited in this wondrous plan of salvation. Helen could not help feeling a certain recoil of spirit, especially when Mr. Seymour remarked, that if there were any of his hearers who had been shocked at the representation which had been given of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, if there

were any who were inclined to think it hard, even unjust, that we should be condemned for a sin in which we had no share, these murmurs must be at once changed into joyful thanksgiving when they beheld the costly plan formed for their deliverance from this condemnation. Helen could not help wondering how this should appear to him in the light of such rich and unmerited mercy; to her it only seemed as a compensation, and scarcely a compensation, for an unmerited infliction. She was shocked at herself for having these feelings, and tried to banish them, but in vain.

In his fourth sermon, Mr. Seymour began by saying that he should now point out the means by which alone any one could appropriate the benefits of this plan of salvation. It might, he said, be hastily inferred that as the ruin was universal, so would the deliverance be. But this was by no means the case. A ransom indeed had been given for all, but it would not be reckoned to the account of any who did not sue it out in the proper form. All had been redeemed, but none but true believers would be saved. By faith alone could any one become interested in Christ, and the faith which alone could save must be not a mere natural faith, but a faith wrought into the soul by the power of the Holy Spirit. A man could no more work this faith in himself than he could raise a dead corpse from the grave. But of this he said he should speak more when he came in the next sermon to unfold the doctrine of Regeneration, or the New Birth.

On the following Sunday, accordingly, to Helen's great surprise, he entirely negatived the opinion, which, if she had had any opinion at all on the subject, had hitherto been hers—namely, that every baptized child is then and there regenerated. He described it as a change wrought by the Holy Spirit in the soul entirely independent of any human agency, but manifesting itself ordinarily by successive steps.

First, there was conviction of sin. The convinced sinner, who is the subject of the new birth, feels himself a lost and perishing creature, exposed to and deserving God's wrath and damnation. Next, he is brought fully to approve of the method of salvation by Christ's suffering in the sinner's stead, and to close with it as exactly suited to his case, and that without which he could not have been saved. And lastly, he is led to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. And now let me ask you, he continued, 'Has that great change taken place in you? Are you born again? Have you ever felt yourselves to be dead in trespasses and sins? Have you had the sentence of death on yourselves? Have you felt that between your soul and hell there is nothing but the vicarious sufferings of the sinner's substitute? If not, you are yet in your sins, and if you die this night unregenerate, unconverted, you must be lost for ever. And now I know that you can no more regenerate your souls than you can create a world. It is the work of God alone; and all counterfeits, all seeming conversions, which have

their origin in mere natural efforts, prove their hollowness by their transient duration. No, you cannot effect this work in yourselves, but I will tell you what you can do,—you can pray for it,—you can beseech God to give you that blessing of a new heart, without which you cannot believe aright in Christ. Pray therefore, pray without ceasing, pray as those who know that if they do not obtain what they ask they must perish for ever.’

This sermon was followed up by another, the last of the series, in which the preacher dwelt on the Divine sovereignty in the bestowment of salvation, in which he argued, or rather asserted, that there was no reason but that of pure sovereign will why God should bestow salvation upon any one; that He might justly withhold it from all; and that in fact it would be given only to those for whom it had been reserved, for the elect. - But as no one could possibly tell whether he might not be one of that favoured number, all might be encouraged to pray if God, haply, might have mercy on them. But they must recollect that there was nothing in their prayers which could give them any claim upon God’s mercy; for though it was true that he had promised to hear prayer, yet that had respect to such prayers only as were dictated by the Holy Spirit.

The whole effect of these sermons on the mind of Helen, was to produce the deepest feelings of anxiety and discouragement. All her ideas of God—of his justice—of his goodness—were completely upturned. It seemed to her that mankind were first, by a purely external arrangement, brought into

circumstances of present sinfulness and future peril; that from this their only escape was through a provision, which though it seemed at first to be all sufficient, yet on closer inspection turned out to be suspended on conditions which were out of their power without a further interposition on the part of God, which there was no direct security would ever be exerted on the behalf of any individual member of the race.

In the whole system thus developed there seemed to her something so factitious, so artificial, so unlike the grand simplicity which she had been accustomed to believe characteristic of God's works; above all, something so repugnant to her strongest convictions of right and wrong, that it is probable she would have turned away in disgust—feeling '*this cannot be truth,—here is no trace of the God I am seeking*'—had it not been for two considerations. The first was the tone of authority with which these doctrines were propounded, and the large array of Scripture texts brought forward in their confirmation. The second, and perhaps the more convincing argument of the two, was the personal holiness and earnest zeal of Mr. Seymour himself. 'Surely,' thought she, 'he cannot be mistaken; the fault must be in myself; perhaps it is the dark and carnal mind, which he says we all have by nature, that prevents my seeing these doctrines as he sees them. I will persevere.' She obtained several books which had been recommended by Mr. Seymour in his sermons, and read them attentively. She saw by these that at least these doc-

trines had been held by good and devoted men in all times, and especially at the Reformation. This all tended to make her fearful of rejecting what advanced so many claims to be *the* truth of God.

Meanwhile, her frequent attendance at St. Mark's, drew on her the notice of Mrs. Pembroke, and also of Mr. Seymour himself. It was suspected by them that she felt more than common interest in the ministry, and Mrs. Pembroke one day came up to her, introduced herself in a peculiarly pleasing and affable manner, and invited her to attend a little meeting for prayer and exposition, which she had established at her own house; where, as she said, she would have an opportunity of making Mr. Seymour's acquaintance. Helen went, overjoyed at the privilege conferred on her. Mr. Seymour met her most cordially, and his conversation and manner took her reason captive, and stifled every latent objection to his doctrines.

From this time she became a regular attendant at St. Mark's, and was considered as forming one of the little society which gathered round Mr. Seymour. She attended Mrs. Pembroke's weekly meetings; the expositions, indeed, seldom or ever met her case, as they were generally on points of experience which she did not understand; but she delighted in going, for it seemed to her a sort of atmosphere of heaven.

She did not thus unite herself to Mr. Seymour's people without encountering considerable opposition from her family. Mrs. Tyrrel, indeed, would have been delighted to see her intimate with a

woman of Mrs. Pembroke's family and fortune, provided the intimacy had extended to the family generally, but Mrs. Pembroke held back rather coldly and haughtily from this; and in noticing Helen, took care to make it evident that it was to herself as an individual, and not as a member of a family, that her attentions were paid. The Tyrrels generally she considered as of the world, and besides, though a good family themselves, they mixed too indiscriminately with the town society.

The attendance at a different church from that to which her family went was also very displeasing to Mrs. Tyrrel; but Helen was resolute on this point, and her father, who had an extreme dread of all family disputes, summarily settled the matter in her favour both as to the church question and as to her visiting at Mrs. Pembroke's. He privately reminded his wife that Helen had never got on very well in the world, and that perhaps she might suit the saints better.

If Helen had been less in earnest, the notice she received from Mr. Seymour and his friends, the interest she excited as one coming out of a worldly family, the variety and excitement introduced by her new associates into her hitherto monotonous life, might possibly have filled up the void in her heart, and she might have sought no further. She might soon have caught the tone of her new acquaintance, have used their language, echoed their sentiments, and accepted the distinction of being the first-fruits of Mr. Seymour's ministry at Hanbury. And for a while, indeed, she did feel

tolerably happy and satisfied, hoping that in time she should experience what she thought she ought. But this could not last. She wanted the reality of religion, not the semblance; she had been made happy at first in the perception that there was an object to be desired and sought, but now she wanted to possess it. She longed for conversion such as it had been described to her; she earnestly sought for conviction of sin as the first step towards faith in Christ as a substitute. After every sermon, after every meeting, she became more and more anxious to see what others saw. The fields which she had to cross in returning from St. Mark's to Milnwood could have witnessed to her agonizing prayers for a new heart; but her feelings, her difficulties remained the same, her anxiety only increased. She had never yet opened her mind to Mr. Seymour; she had been treated by him as one of course 'converted;' but at length she broke through all barriers of reluctance, and sought an interview with him.

CHAPTER IV.

ANXIETY.

The larger number of serious and inquiring persons are little disturbed with doubts respecting articles of faith which are above their comprehension. It is only when a doctrine, in the sense in which they have been taught it, appears to contradict their notions of right and wrong, or to be at variance with some of the Divine attributes, that they are surprised, and perhaps alienated.

COLERIDGE, *Aids to Reflection*.

SEATED in Mr. Seymour's study at the Parsonage, poor Helen took courage to lay open her whole case to him. She told him of the longings after religion she had had before she heard him;—to these he seemed to attach little value. She acknowledged to him the various objections which had arisen in her mind whilst hearing him preach, especially those relating to the imputation of Adam's sin, the entail of Divine wrath, and the transmission of a depraved and morally helpless nature to his posterity.

He heard her patiently, but shook his head.

'These are the old objections, my dear Miss Tyrrel; the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him. But why will you concern yourself with these mysterious questions; why not attend to those things alone which make for your peace?'

‘But these questions do seem to me to be involved in the things which concern my soul’s salvation. Believe me, if they were merely curious speculations I should be thankful to leave them. In every book which I read, in every sermon which I hear from you, I am met by the statement that before I can truly come to Christ I must feel myself a lost and guilty sinner.’

‘And cannot you receive that as a fact, on the testimony of Scripture, without seeking to know the why and the wherefore?’

‘I might do so if it were only necessary to feel myself *lost*, but I cannot think how any one is to feel *guilty* on the testimony of another.’

‘But surely your own conscience must tell you that he is guilty who does not love his Maker with all his heart and soul?’

‘That, sir, is just where the difficulties I spoke of meet me. It seems to me impossible to love God so long as we look upon Him as having sentenced us to eternal death for a sin in which we had no concern.’

‘But we were concerned in it in virtue of our federal union with Adam.’

‘But as a fact we had no actual concern in it; to speak plainly, it was what we had no power to help.’

‘These sort of objections, Miss Tyrrel, tend to actual atheism, for you cannot deny that mankind do suffer evils, such as labour, death, &c., for the sin of Adam.’

‘Oh, but I could understand that there might be

nothing inconsistent with the Divine goodness in bringing certain *temporal* evils upon mankind, because, in fact, those often turn to blessings; but eternal-irremediable evil—either everlasting punishment for imputed sin, or the infliction of a sinful nature which eventually brings with it the same penalty,—it is really dreadful to think of such things being hereditary.’

‘You press this point too far. The awful mystery of original sin should never be viewed apart from redemption; for whatever apparent severity there might be in our being condemned in Adam is quite swallowed up in our deliverance through Christ. It is for sending his Son into the world to die for us that we are chiefly bound to love God.’

‘I hardly dare tell you, Mr. Seymour, how that doctrine sometimes appears to me, and yet I wish you to know the worst of my case.’

‘Do not be afraid, Miss Tyrrel; I am too much used to the enmity of the carnal heart to be surprised that it should rise against the most vital doctrine of our faith.’

‘It seems to me, then, that a tremendous difficulty was first created that it might be removed by a still more tremendous expedient,—that we were made sinners by a Divine decree that we might be saved by the suffering of a holy and innocent being; and when I think of this I feel it impossible to exercise either gratitude or love. If Christ were *man only*, I should feel indeed that his compassion gave him every claim on our love—but then it would seem to me that He was a greater friend to us than God.

But viewing Him as Divine, I can only view his interposition as the interposition of God; and, as I said before, I am utterly baffled and bewildered that we should have been brought into such a state, merely, as it would seem, to be redeemed from it at such fearful cost. You will think me very wicked, Mr. Seymour,' she added, bursting into tears, 'but indeed, indeed I do not encourage these thoughts; I try to stifle them, but they seem to me to twine round every article of faith; and if I would cease to have them, I must cease to think of religion at all.'

'My dear young lady, I will not say such things to you as I might, did not I suspect that your mind is in a morbid state, and that the great enemy of souls takes advantage of this to throw in his fiery suggestions. But you must resist him, or he will lead you into complete infidelity. It is your pride of intellect which gives him an advantage. You evidently cannot bear to receive anything you do not perfectly understand. You really must cast down these high imaginations, and every high thing which exalteth itself against God. Now, without going into the question of original sin, you know enough, surely, of yourself to know that you are a great sinner, and that your sins could not have been remitted had not Christ paid your debt?'

'There again is one of my great difficulties. I do *not* feel that my sins have been such as to deserve eternal punishment, or to require such an expiation.'

'Surely it is not for the sinner to dictate to his judge what his sins require?'

‘Certainly not; but if he is to be brought to acknowledge the justice of his sentence, it must be made plain to him.’

‘Are you conscious of sin at all?’

‘Oh, surely; but not of wilful deliberate transgression. I have always tried to do what I knew to be right, though I have often failed. I am conscious of many wrong feelings and passions, but I do not cherish and indulge them.’

‘Then, in fact, you feel no need of Christ?’

‘Oh, indeed I do. I would willingly have him take away all my darkness, selfishness, vanity, self-seeking—all my sin; I would have him guide me into all truth, but I do not as yet feel that my sins could not be forgiven but through his suffering for them.’

‘Then you do not truly see the need of him at all. My dear Miss Tyrrel, I am sorry to say it, but if these are your real feelings, and not, as I am inclined to believe, the morbid growth of a mind diseased, I must be faithful with you, and tell you that you have as yet neither part nor lot in this matter. The saints of God are broken and contrite in heart, but you, by your own confession, have no contrition. To them that believe Christ is precious, but he is not precious to you.’

‘Oh, Mr. Seymour, yes.’

‘Not otherwise precious than he is to a mere Unitarian. But I am willing to believe that there is in you some good thing towards the Lord, or else you would not come to me. Now what you have to do is to give God no rest until he takes

away your heart of stone, and gives you a heart of flesh. Your only hope is in constant unceasing prayer, meanwhile keeping aloof from all worldly influences.'

Helen came away with a heavy heart, feeling her difficulties in no degree diminished, and having had her case represented as more awful than she had even herself thought it. Would the result have been the same if Mr. Seymour had carefully analysed the real nature of sin, exhibited it to her in detail, and shown her its entire opposition to the divine nature? Might not this sort of instruction have called up spontaneously the very feelings he bade her pray for?

CHAPTER V.

DESPONDENCY.

What wilt thou do? Wilt thou struggle hard to obtain salvation from some power which is refusing it to thee? Wilt thou say many prayers, perform many penances, to get back the good will of some distant, unknown being, whose nature thou guessest from thine own? Or, on the other hand, wilt thou be still, saying, 'It will come if it will come; I have nothing to do with it; God can send it me if He likes?'

MAURICE'S *Sermons on the Prayer Book*.

THIS first conversation of Helen's with Mr. Seymour was but the forerunner of many subsequent ones. Sometimes he would ask her how she was going on, and appoint a time for her to come and talk with him; sometimes she would resort to him of her own accord. His language increased in severity on each occasion. He set before her the terrors of the Lord,—the aggravated doom which must overtake a person perishing in the midst of such abundant light and knowledge. He told her that if she went on thus her heart would become as hard as the nether millstone. All was in vain. She was terrified; her soul was wrung with anguish; she was excited to spasmodic efforts for deliverance, but no deliverance came. There was no voice, nor any that answered; and exhausted by her efforts, she would sink back into a state of

comparative apathy, till again aroused by some book or sermon. And there was no book, no preacher, no oracle, that she did not, if possible, consult, if only a promise, a hope, of benefit was held out. As her main difficulty, the log which lay at the threshold, was the necessity of a certain measure and kind of conviction of sin, she sought out the most awakening preachers and books in hope that each one might have something to say which she had not yet heard. With regard to preachers, she had not much opportunity of hearing strangers at Hanbury. But when she visited her sister, she went from church to chapel without at all confining herself to those of her own communion. This, of course, was not very pleasing to the Mordaunts. Even Mr. Mordaunt, who was not at all inclined to be rigid on such points, was somewhat shocked when he found himself regarded with utter contempt as not preaching the Gospel; and still more when he found his sister-in-law and visitor did not scruple to absent herself from his church to resort to a 'conventicle.' Mrs. Mordaunt positively declared that it was impossible to have Helen at her house, and her visits ceased accordingly.

At home very little notice was attracted by her state of mind. Very soon after she knew Mr. Seymour, she declared her intention of withdrawing from all worldly society; but even prior to this time she had gone out so little, that the difference was but slightly marked, and Mrs. Tyrrel cared the less about it, as Emma and

Harriet were now old enough to go into company, and three unmarried daughters, one past her bloom, were not pleasant to take about with her. So Helen stayed at home, or went only amongst her own friends, who were not numerous; Mr. and Mrs. Seymour, and Mrs. Pembroke's family, with her aunt, Mrs. Stevens, being nearly all her associates.

To give up general society was no trial to her, but to give up general literature was more difficult; however, she did it. She had been warned that in her state of mind she could not afford to occupy herself with mere amusing works, or even works of general information. And as she found that if she took up any work of interest, her spirit was apt to become lighter, and her mind to throw off its burden for a time, she looked upon this as a snare, and determined to be more watchful in future. Moreover, as she had repeatedly been told that her difficulties were chiefly the result of pride of intellect, she thought her only safe plan was to starve this intellect as much as possible. Her reading consisted now of direct religious treatises—very often reprints of old Puritan writers—religious biographies, diaries, over which she pored with intense anxiety, and religious newspapers or magazines. The same views, the same sentiments, were echoed in all.

With a mind always dwelling on one idea, and with habits quite distinct from those of her family, it was scarcely to be wondered at that her home was unhappy. With Mrs. Tyrrel she had never,

since her school days, been a favourite; but now her religious profession became a stock excuse for alienation, and to it was attributed everything disagreeable and objectionable. 'She was sure,' Mrs. Tyrrel often remarked, '*she* had cause to dread such extreme views, when she saw how uncharitable and unamiable they made people.'

And in truth she had greater reason for this complaint than she had for many others. Helen was not at that time half so amiable in her family as she had once been. Part of this deterioration was indeed owing to the chilling influence which the consciousness of the disapprobation and dislike of others always brings over the heart; part also to a kind of uneasy feeling that she ought to do something towards the conversion of others, though, in truth, she felt utterly unfit to attempt it. But neither even was she so watchful over her general conduct, her words, or her temper, as formerly. 'Of what use,' she secretly argued, 'is any thing, unless it springs from gratitude to Christ? Without this nothing is acceptable; and this gratitude I can never feel till I am convinced of sin. That, then, is what I have first to seek for.'

With her sisters Emma and Harriet, she had nothing in common. They were as fond of pleasure as Julia had been, without her sense and talent. They kept together, and regarded their sister's religion as something with which they had nothing to do,—a peculiar and unfortunate idiosyncrasy.

Of her brothers Helen saw but little. Walter, the younger, had given his father a good deal of

trouble by his wildness and extravagance at college, and had at last been disposed of by a colonial appointment. The elder had followed the profession of the law, had married, and was settled as a solicitor in the West of England. Helen paid one visit to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tyrrel, but finding her sister-in-law much prejudiced against evangelical views, and no clergyman of that school in the neighbourhood, she had not cared to repeat the visit, more especially as her allowance was too moderate to suit well with expensive journeys.

Whilst Helen was thus isolated from her natural ties, the charm of her acquired friendships was fast wearing off. She could not help suspecting that Mr. Seymour was getting somewhat tired of her. Nor was she mistaken. Vexed and disappointed that nothing he could say seemed to work any change, and yet finding that she did not grow indifferent or return to the world, as he had sometimes predicted she would, he began to regard her case as one of morbid anxiety, self-torture, arising from an over-curious and speculative turn of mind, and he rather avoided any direct conversation with her, hoping that her doubts would die away of themselves. When Helen perceived this, as she was not slow to do, she fell in immediately with his plan, and kept her miseries shut up in her own bosom. But she could not rest, and, goaded ever by a terrible anxiety, she twice or thrice took the measure of writing to eminent ministers whom she knew by reputation, stating her case, and soliciting their advice. 'Men do not

scruple to do this to physicians in cases of mysterious disease,' thought she, 'and what is disease of the body to disease of the soul?' But no help came. One was shocked at her disclosures, and treated her case as one of peculiar enormity; another hinted at the mind preying on itself till it became diseased; a third did not answer her at all.

About this time she met with some books, ably written, which discountenanced the idea of prayer being the only resource of a sinner seeking conversion, and urged meditation on suitable subjects as the proper and sufficient means for attaining a change of heart. She was at first much struck with this view, and earnestly set herself to make trial of the plan. But this was worse than all; for the more she meditated and pondered on duty to God, on sin, and other kindred subjects, the more sharply stood out before her the perplexing statements which had at first so harassed her, and she was fain, in utter distress, to turn her thoughts away.

Thus the years rolled heavily on, and her habitual frame had become one of almost sullen dejection. She had begun to look upon hers as an exceptional case, something like Cowper's, whose sad history she again and again studied.

'Do you suppose,' one day asked Mr. Seymour, in an exposition of the passage in the 11th of St. Luke, Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, &c., 'do you suppose that there will ever be any one who will be able to say at the Day of Judgment, Lord thou knowest that I did ask Thee for

salvation : asked Thee earnestly, asked Thee long, but never received it?

‘Yes,’ said Helen firmly to herself, whilst her eyes were riveted on the opposite wall in blank despair—‘Yes, there will be one, and that will be me!’

She had that day attained her thirty-third year.

CHAPTER VI.

STREAKS IN THE HORIZON.

It seems to me like yesterday,
The morning when I took my way
Upon the shore, in solitude;
For, in that miserable mood,
It was relief to quit the ken
And the inquiring looks of men.

TRENCH's *Justin Martyr*.

EIGHT years had now elapsed since Julia's wedding, and all was going on much the same at Milnwood. The family were not given to travel, —money was scarce—Mr. Tyrrel hated change, and it was seldom that a visit or an excursion broke in on the even tenour of their life. But about this time Mrs. Stevens had a somewhat serious attack of illness, and on her recovery was recommended to spend some time at the sea-side. She made choice of Helen as her companion, and it was settled that they should go to Ramsgate.

A few weeks previously, occurred an event of some importance in the Milnwood sphere—the death of Mr. Nelson, the old vicar.

Who was to be his successor was of course a question eagerly debated. The living was in the gift of a college, and just before Helen and her aunt left home they heard that it was given to the Rev. Richard Hargreave, one of the Fellows. The

matter had not excited so much interest in Helen's mind as might have been supposed. She was indeed by no means comfortable in her attendance at St. Mark's; she had lost confidence in Mr. Seymour, but she had ceased to expect much from any change of teachers. If their doctrines were evangelical, what more could they do for her than they had done? and if not evangelical, what could they be but mischievous?

When the travellers arrived at Ramsgate they found the place very full, lodgings in the best situations extravagantly high, and Mrs. Stevens, wishing for greater quiet, removed to Broadstairs.

Helen had not seen the sea since she was a child, and it was almost as new to her as if she had never seen it before. Mrs. Stevens had long observed that she did not look well or happy; she did not quite understand what was the cause of her depressed spirits, but she saw there was something, and she was glad to give her this little change. She would not allow her to confine herself to her limited range of exercise, but pressed her to go out at other times, and was rather troubled because she could not immediately meet with a companion for her. This was no subject of regret to Helen herself, for a solitary evening stroll along the cliff to the North Foreland, or in the opposite direction towards Ramsgate, was her greatest solace and refreshment. At these times she read and meditated, or gazed at the stars in the early twilight, and wondered what the end would be.

She had several times in these lonely walks met

a gentleman of middle age and dignified presence, dressed like a clergyman. Once or twice he had bowed slightly as he conceded to her the narrow pathway, and she had been struck by the intellectual cast of his features.

One evening, about a week after their arrival, she had strolled along the beach in the direction of Ramsgate, and had seated herself on a mass of rock, not far from the cutting which led to the cliff. She was lost in thought. She had the day before met with a modest little volume, the contents of which interested her greatly. It was a book edited by Abbott, the author of *The Young Christian*, and purporting to be a narrative of conversations held by the American Payson with his child. Many things in it had struck Helen as singularly descriptive of her own case. She had been reading as she walked, and was still thinking over the contents, when she suddenly perceived that the tide was coming in fast, and fearful that she might not have time to get round the projecting points of the cliff, she got up hastily and hurried towards the cutting. It was not till she had reached the top of the cliff and walked on a few paces that she found she had left her book on the beach. To go back for it would be dangerous, and after a minute's hesitation she felt she must abandon it to its fate, when, looking up, she saw the stranger whom she had so often met emerging from the ravine with the book in his hand. He came forward and presented it to her, saying at the same time, 'I found this on the spot where you had been sitting. Not knowing

whether I might overtake you, I took pains to decipher the address of this letter, which I found near the book, and which appeared to have fallen out of it. I hoped by that means to restore your property in case of missing you.'

Helen took the book and letter with thanks. The letter was directed, as the light was just sufficient to show, 'Miss Tyrrel, Milnwood, near Hanbury, H—— shire.'

'May I ask you,' inquired the stranger, 'if you are well acquainted with Milnwood?'

'It is my home.'

'Indeed! then I must beg you to admit me to your acquaintance, for I am likely to be a good deal connected with Milnwood. You are aware, perhaps, that there is a clergyman appointed to the living?'

'Yes; I understand it is the Rev. Richard Hargreave, Fellow of —— College, I think. I am not speaking to Mr. Hargreave?'

'Not exactly; but to a near connexion. I am Dr. Randolph, his father-in-law. But we had better be walking; the evening is closing in. You will allow me to see you home?'

Helen assented. On the way back she learned that Dr. Randolph, who had resigned the head mastership of —— School, on account of failing health, was now thinking of settling at Milnwood.

'You know the Grange, I dare say?' he said.

'Oh, yes! very well; it has long been without a resident family.'

'Well, if my offer for that is accepted, as seems

likely, I hope we shall be neighbours. In the meantime you must give Mrs. Randolph and my daughter the pleasure of making your acquaintance at Broadstairs. We are staying at Barnes' Library. You are not alone here, I suppose?

Helen told him where and with whom she was staying, and having seen her to the door of her aunt's abode, he left her.

Mrs. Stevens was much interested by Helen's account of her meeting with Dr. Randolph, and fully concurred in the desirableness of making acquaintance with the family. She had heard from some one who knew them that they were delightful people, and Dr. Randolph, every one knew, was a first-rate man. 'How fortunate it will be, my dear, if they settle at the Grange; two nice families there will make the village quite a different place.'

'I have made an acquaintance for you, Agnes,' said Dr. Randolph, the same evening, to his daughter. 'I have met and spoken to that lady whom I have mentioned to you before, and, curiously, she turns out to be one of the Tyrrels, of Milnwood Lodge, whom Hargreave mentions as among his principal parishioners.'

'Oh! how very pleasant,' said Agnes; 'she will be able to give us all sorts of details about the place. Does she seem a nice person?'

'Very; she is lady-like and gentle in her manners, but there is something sad in her countenance—dreamy and spiritless in her whole bearing, and this struck me even when I first met her. I

watched her this evening when she did not see me, and I feel assured from her countenance and manner that she has something on her mind. From the character of the book I picked up and restored to her, I should also judge that this *something* is in some form or other connected with religion.'

Mrs. Stevens and Helen called the next day. Dr. Randolph was at home, and presented them to his wife and daughter. Mrs. Randolph was a lady-like woman, and her kind and cordial manner captivated Mrs. Stevens. Whilst they were conversing about Milnwood, the Grange, &c., Helen had time to get acquainted with the daughter.

Agnes Randolph was not quite thirty, but looked older. She had been sickly from childhood, and her appearance was indicative of ill-health. She was moreover very lame, one leg being considerably shorter than the other; and this defect, combined with her general feebleness, rendered her almost unable to move without assistance. But her countenance was full of life and intelligence, and her manner so cheerful and animated, that it seemed to render superfluous any feelings of compassion.

'You must tell us all about Milnwood,' said she to Helen; 'recollect, everything will be interesting. First, what kind of a church is it?'

'Quite a poor mean building,' said Helen.

'Very old—is it not?'

'I believe so—yes, I should think it was.'

'Can you tell me what style of architecture it is in?'

‘No, really I cannot; I am very ignorant about such matters.’

‘Early Norman, I believe it is,’ said Dr. Randolph, coming to them. ‘It has round arches, has it not? The chancel arch, I have heard, is a fine specimen of that style.’

‘I believe it has round arches,’ said Helen, trying to recollect, ‘but the fact is, I very seldom go to Milnwood Church.’

‘Is it not your parish church?’ inquired Agnes.

‘Yes, it is; but I always go to St. Mark’s, the new church at Hanbury—it is the only church where the Gospel is preached.’

‘Who is the clergyman at St. Mark’s,’ asked Dr. Randolph?

‘Mr. Seymour, an excellent man.’

‘Mr. Seymour—yes, I have heard of him,’ said Dr. Randolph. ‘Is there not a Mr. Bolton at some church in Hanbury?’

‘Yes, he is curate to Dr. Winter, at the parish church; he has not been there long.’

‘He is a man who is in earnest about his duty,’ said Dr. Randolph. ‘Is he not considered to preach the Gospel?’

‘I have never heard him,’ replied Helen. ‘I have been told that he sometimes says very good things about the work of Christ, but that he is not at all clear as to the total corruption of human nature, and the work of the Spirit. He holds very much aloof too from Missionary and Bible Meetings, but that is probably owing to Dr. Winter.’

Agnes, feeling that the clergy were rather unsafe subjects, turned the conversation by asking Helen whether there were good libraries at Hanbury.

‘Not very good; there are book societies in the place, one for general literature, to which most of the principal people belong, and one more especially for religious works, to which Mr. Seymour, Mrs. Pembroke, and many others belong.’

‘Is that for general literature well conducted?—What is the subscription?’

‘I really do not know. I have never belonged to it. I belong to Mr. Seymour’s.’

‘And what kind of works do you admit?’

‘Religious biography, travels of missionaries, periodicals, experimental divinity; in short, any thing that bears on the best interests of the soul.’

‘That would take a wide range, in my opinion, Miss Tyrrel,’ said Dr. Randolph. ‘Everything that enlarges our acquaintance with God’s works, and especially with his great work, man, has, so it seems to me, to do with our best interests. History, philosophy, science, poetry, have all their special agency.’

‘History—yes, such histories as show the fulfilment of prophecy are useful auxiliaries, but history requires to be written by Christians, otherwise it is likely to do as much harm as good. We have some of the Tract Society’s historical publications.’

‘I am not fond of histories written or compiled with a special theological purpose,’ said Dr. Ran-

dolph. 'If we can but get the truth fairly and impartially told, it can hardly fail of usefulness where the mind is in a fit state to receive the instruction.'

'Yes, if the mind is in a fit state; but how few minds are? And is it not best for those who are conscious of their own unfitness to confine themselves to such reading as has a direct effect upon the heart?'

'But do you always find, Miss Tyrrel,' inquired Dr. Randolph, 'that *direct* operation upon the heart is the most successful?'

'No, I do not indeed,' said Helen, suppressing a sigh, 'but I always feel there is great danger in getting so much interested in books of general literature, as to become comparatively uninterested in religious books, and especially in the Bible.'

'There would be that danger, certainly,' said Dr. Randolph, 'to one who looked upon the subjects of which general literature treats as belonging to a sphere with which God has nothing to do; but to one who believes Him to be the centre of his own world, there is no *truth* either in fact or opinion which has not a religious significance, and a mission to lead us to Him.'

Mrs. Stevens was by this time rising to depart, and leave was taken with many assurances from all parties of the pleasure which would result from pursuing the acquaintance.

'How do you like Miss Tyrrel, Agnes?' said Dr. Randolph in the course of the day.

'She has a pleasing countenance and manner,

but, papa, does she not seem to you rather narrow-minded ?

‘Very ; but still I should say she was one whose mind has been artificially narrowed. She has been trained in an exclusive school, but I am much mistaken if there are not depths in that soul which have never yet been fathomed, or fathomed only to be closed.’

CHAPTER VII.

A PARALLEL CASE EXAMINED.

We are not to expect crises in our lives before we take up our rights.

All that kind of working in order to escape some punishment, or to secure some individual reward, keeps alive covetousness, even invests it with a holy character.

MAURICE'S *Sermons on the Prayer Book.*

FROM this time scarce a day elapsed without some intercourse between Helen and the Randolphs, and mutual regard rapidly increased. Agnes soon found that there was simplicity and originality in Helen's character, which was only masked by her peculiar modes of thought and expression; and Helen on her part delighted in the frank affectionate manners of Agnes, and in the gentle consideration of her mother. But it was Dr. Randolph on whom her interest most firmly fastened. She listened with the greatest attention to his rich and varied style of conversation, and reposed with satisfaction on the justness and clearness of his remarks. Sometimes, indeed, he puzzled her; for though the Divine will seemed ever to preside over all his decisions, there was a total absence of the peculiar forms of expression which she had been accustomed to identify with piety.

No conversation directly religious arose between them for some time, till at last one morning, when Helen was called to her aunt's sitting-room to receive a visitor, she found Dr. Randolph examining a book which lay on the table. It was the identical book, *The Pastor's Daughter*, which had at first introduced them to one another.

'I wish you would lend me this little book for a day,' said he. 'I should like just to look it through.'

'Most willingly,' said Helen; 'it seems like a child's book at first, but it touches upon some very deep questions.'

'So I perceive,' said Dr. Randolph.

'It is a book,' added Helen, 'which has interested me greatly; which I have deeply studied. I should really be thankful to have your opinion of it.'

'Well, I will endeavour to give it you to-morrow. You will come and dine with us? Mrs. Randolph has commissioned me to ask Mrs. Stevens and you to do so, and she has consented.'

The next day, accordingly, Dr. Randolph, drew Helen into the further drawing-room, which he had converted into a kind of study, and drew forth the book.

He read the first sentence. "Maria was the daughter of a clergyman who resided in a pleasant village in America: of his character I will only say that earth has rarely witnessed a more lovely exemplification of the principles of the Christian religion."

'That I believe is true; Payson was an admirable

man, and there are some of his remarks which show a far higher conception of God and of the nature of goodness than we usually meet with in religious books. Nevertheless, I can hardly conceive anything more calculated to lead to utter despair, or to rancorous infidelity, than his method of dealing with his daughter. He evidently set out with the theory that there could be nothing in man but evil, and that all religion, instead of being a seed sown in soil prepared for it and suited to it, is an external and foreign product supernaturally conveyed entire into a soil with which it has nothing in common. Hence he crushed and cast away every nascent feeling of piety within his child's mind, every feeling with which a child's religion must begin. They were all merely natural, and *therefore* worthless. Now, here, in the opening of the history, when the little creature was only a year and a half old, (what precocious beings these American children must be!) is an instance given of her praying earnestly and seriously to God for a spiritual blessing, and it is added, that her parents from the change in her conduct (at a year and a half old!) almost began to hope that the infantile petition had been heard. It might have been, I think, notwithstanding the childish faults which she afterwards exhibited. A divine seed sown in the heart would still have to struggle with many contrary elements. But whether this were so or not, the culture she received was calculated, in my opinion, to kill the good and mature the evil. It would be endless to particularize any passage in

which this comes forth, because the whole book is full of it; but now here is one remarkable instance,—(I think it must strike every one, by the way, that the girl always has the best of it in argument, and that she is always rather overborne by her father's authority than convinced by his reasoning);—but here she says, 'I cannot force myself to repent or love God.'

'Certainly not, Maria; repentance and love are always voluntary.' That is a very important remark, and Payson often brings out beautifully the spontaneous, unselfish character of religion, only he makes a wrong use of it. It goes on—

'Then how are we to blame, papa?'

'In the same way that you are to blame when you commit a fault against me, and are not sorry for it. Suppose that when I endeavoured to show you that you were wrong, you should say, 'It is not my fault; I can't be sorry; I have tried as hard as I can, but I can't force myself to feel sorry.' What should you think of such language? Would it be any excuse?'

'I suppose, papa, you would tell me I ought to be sorry without trying!'

'Just so, my dear, and I tell you the same now. You cannot force your heart to love God and to repent, you say. You are required to do so voluntarily, without forcing.'

'Papa, there is something I want to say, but I don't know how?'

'Try, at least.'

'Well, it seems to me that God has made us so

that we naturally love some things and hate others. When we hear of anybody that is wicked, we cannot help hating them; and we love good people without trying.'—And I say that he who loves goodness and hates evil—loves God unconsciously and will love him consciously if His character is but rightly set before him. Little Maria had a true insight into the usual nature of man. Her father replies,

"Very true; but what has this to do with your excuse?"

"Why, papa, then it seems to me that God has no right to control our affections. If he has made us so that we naturally love some things, it is of no use to require us to love other things, for we cannot do it if we try ever so hard."

"What sort of characters or things cannot we love, Maria?"

"Why, papa, you know, any thing that is bad."

"Your objection, then, would be a very good one if God had required us to love a wicked being, but as he has not, I do not see how it will help you. If God had required us to approve and love the character of Nero, for instance, it would have been an unjust, tyrannical command, and we could not have obeyed it. But he only requires us to love the same qualities in him which we love naturally, as you say, in other beings. When you see a man who is generous, or benevolent, or forgiving, you admire and love those qualities. Why should you not admire and love them in God?" (All very clear and just.)

"Maria reflected for some time. 'Papa, I think,

it seems, papa, I am almost afraid to say what I think,—but if my mind is made so as to love certain qualities, and I always do admire them in my fellow-creatures, why should I not admire and love them in God—if—if—

“I understand you, Maria—if they exist in him. You have asked an important question, and one which I think I shall be able to answer satisfactorily,—and so on.—I also could solve this difficulty. Maria did not love God, because he was not presented to her under the characters which our nature teaches us to love and admire. She could have loved Him who is Love, and who, as a Father, pitieth them that fear Him ; but she could not love Him who was represented as a hard man, reaping where He had not sowed, and gathering where He had not strawed.

‘Her father tells her in the next conversation, ‘You and other sinners would have no objection to the holiness and justice of God, if he were not your sovereign, or if you had not transgressed his law. But as soon as you perceive that his holiness makes him hate sin, and his justice and truth lead him to punish the sinner, then you begin to hate these perfections.’ Now, I do not believe that, except in some extreme cases, persons do hate justice, even if it is exercised against themselves, provided they are convinced that it is justice, and provided it is not pushed to extreme severity. And in judging of the character of God, and His government of men, we must never lose sight of the fact that He is a Father, not simply a sovereign. Now, I think He is represented in

these conversations as dealing with mankind in a way which would shock our feelings, if we saw such treatment of his children by a human father. Here, she is told that her will is depraved, that it is absolutely certain she never will repent unless God makes her,—that the sinner, that is, of course, every human being, *never* has any inclination to good, but only to evil; and yet that this forms no excuse, but that as the very first step in religion she must feel that she deserves to perish for not having loved God and her neighbour every moment of her life. Why, it was impossible she could feel it! The core of the difficulty was, I think, Dr. Payson's view of the actual nature of man; but more of that another time. Now, see how every beginning of good is at once put down. I must observe by the way, that the tender love which the poor child is represented as feeling for her father, is proof enough that she had a real love to God, whose image he bore. She says, 'I don't know why I should be so glad to have people converted, if I am not a Christian.' He explains this, and justly perhaps, out of sympathy with his joy in the conversion of his people—a very lovely feeling, certainly, but too personal and individual to prove a real love of God and his cause.

'She then goes on to describe her emotions in the contemplation of the flowers, the stars, &c., and to say, 'I had a strange feeling, that made the tears come into my eyes, and it seemed as if I loved God, and loved to look up to heaven and call Him my Father.' It makes one almost indignant to

read how this most true and genuine feeling, this echo of the voice of God in the soul,* was immediately put down with stern Puritan harshness, as mere mistake and delusion, because those who have such feelings are disgusted when God is presented under the theological character described here as 'spotless purity and unswerving justice,' but really that of implacable, indiscriminating severity. But the father goes on, 'There are other feelings of the unregenerate heart which are often mistaken for religion. There is a certain class of desires after excellence which come under this head. A man, we will suppose, reads a book in which some noble or excellent trait of character is held up to view; its beauty and loveliness are painted in vivid colours, and it is illustrated by examples; his mind is kindled by the representation, and he wishes that he were such a character. Suppose, for instance, that sincerity is the virtue thus held up to view; and as the man reads, he contrasts the picture with the meanness, the dissimulation, the petty artifices, the hypocrisy, which he has witnessed, and has perhaps sometimes practised; he turns away with loathing from himself and the world, and longs for truth and purity.'—This, also, I should say, was the voice of God in the soul; His drawing of men to Him who is the truth. But no—'Desires such as I have

* Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.—*Acts* xiv. 17.

described have no reference to God. The man does not wish to be sincere because God loves truth and abhors falsehood ; but his understanding and conscience tell him that truth is a lovely and excellent quality.'—Are not then the understanding and conscience from God, and has not our approbation of good, our aspiration after it, reference to Him who formed us so to approve or aspire ? But Dr. Payson's system required him to esteem nothing of God which did not come *supernaturally*, and through a certain specified process. He seems to imply, too, that we ought to love truth, not because it is in itself good, and because our nature is framed to approve it, but simply because it is commanded. Now, this is a piece of their theology which supposes that there is no *essential* difference between Right and Wrong, but that they are made so by the will of God. He proceeds, 'Besides, such desires do not lead him to humble, persevering effort ; to admire and to wish for virtue is not enough. There is another thing, too ; if it was from any love of holiness that such desires proceeded, the man would desire equally the other constituents of holiness ; he would desire to be meek, humble, self-denying, firm in spirit ; but these virtues he despises.'

'Now, there are some arguments of the famous William Law (author of the *Serious Call*), in his *Remarks on the Fable of the Bees*, which seem to me to meet this objection. He is answering a writer who is arguing against the reality of moral virtue. 'It is further objected,' he says, 'that Philo's

charity must be *mere complexion*, and not virtue ; for if it were virtue, he would not allow himself the neglect of other duties.'

'This, again, is a false conclusion ; for a man may perform one duty upon a principle of virtue and sense of duty, and yet through mistake or negligence be deficient in others. Our present state is a state of great weakness and imperfection ; and our reason, weak as it is, has a thousand impediments to hinder and divert its force. In the affairs of civil life we are neither perfectly wise nor wholly foolish, and we are almost the same men in the things which relate to God. In some instances reason and religion get more power over us, and guide us under a sense of duty ; whilst in other parts of our life, it may be very apparent that reason has a less share in our actions. But to conclude that reason or a principle of virtue does not influence us in any part of our behaviour, because it does not act equally and constantly in every other part of our lives, is as absurd as to affirm that we do not think at all in anything that we do, because we do not think with the same exactness or attention in everything that is done by us. If Philo lives in the neglect or violation of some duties, this shows that he is a weak, imperfect man ; but it does not show that he is the *same* weak and imperfect man, and as devoid of any principle of virtue when he does his duty, as when he neglects it ; for it is as possible for him to be charitable upon a principle of duty, and yet fail in some other respects, as it is possible for a

man to use his reason in some things and not in others, as to reason right on some points, and yield to folly in others.

‘What is here said as relating to good actions is equally applicable to the good feelings which are the spring of actions. They are not to be condemned as spurious in kind because they are not equally active at all times, or because they are found in company with many deficiencies. They ought rather to be strengthened and cherished, inasmuch as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. St. James says, indeed, that whosoever keepeth the whole law, and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all ; but that, I presume, means the systematic, presumptuous violation of any one point, not infractions of it through ignorance or infirmity. Where a person, indeed, is seeking to establish a claim of merit, a claim to a particular reward through observance of a law, he may as well, with reference to *that end*, fail in every point as in one ; but in respect of character, the case is different. But I shall really tire you out.’

‘Oh! no,’ said Helen, ‘you cannot think how much I am interested—indeed,—perhaps,—you will be surprised, but most of Maria’s difficulties have been mine.’

‘I am not at all surprised, Miss Tyrrel. It appears to me that they must be the difficulties of every one who is brought up in such a system, and possesses a reflecting mind. Do you understand what was the point to which Dr. Payson wished to bring his daughter? She is exhorted to submit to

be saved in God's own way—to be saved by Christ. Now what was it prevented her from this? She was continually praying, and striving, and longing to be saved; what prevented her from submitting to be saved?

'I suppose,' said Helen, 'that in this submission was implied a recognition of guilt, and this she either could not, or would not, make.'

'Could not, evidently,' said Dr. Randolph. 'The views which she had had presented to her of the Divine character were such that she could not feel guilty in not loving Him, and here seemed to lay the root of the difficulty. She could not make this submission. She stumbled at this stumbling-stone, and in putting it before her, her father, with all his antagonism to self-righteousness, did indeed put her upon seeking salvation by the works of the law.'

'How so?'

'Why, he made the attainment of certain feelings, a certain state of mind, essential before a person comes to Christ. *He* says, indeed, that they are necessary in the nature of things—that God cannot save us without repentance. That is perfectly true, because a right state of mind is a part of salvation; but a desire to be restored to God is the beginning of repentance, and all that is necessary in the nature of things towards a person being saved by Christ, is that there should be feeling enough to bring him to Him. That, I presume, she had. Now by the setting up this work of the law between her and the Saviour, he made it cer-

tain that she never would attain the right state of mind. Observe, the feelings required of her were, I think, impossible; but if they had been ever so reasonable it would have been the same. By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified, and mainly for this reason, that the spiritual nature of God's law of love is such that it cannot be realized through the hope of reward or the fear of punishment, through anxiety for acceptance or dread of rejection. Payson puts this clearly enough in one place. 'Suppose for a moment that love were dependent on volition; in other words, that you could love by an act of your will; and suppose that, seeing it was necessary for your happiness that you should love God, you should *will* to love Him, and should begin to do so, would that be love in reality, or would it be selfishness disguised? Love is the very opposite of selfishness, and to talk of loving because our happiness requires it is a contradiction in terms, and an impossibility in point of fact.' Nothing can be better or truer than that. And he is right also when he says that though love cannot be awakened by direct effort, we are not therefore free from blame in not feeling it. It is certainly a proof of a perverted disposition, and of some indulged wrong habit, when we do not love what is really loveable. But this poor girl had been told that it would have been perfectly just if God had left us all to perish for the sin of Adam, and other similar things, and it is no wonder she could not feel herself to blame for her lovelessness. But we really must go to our people in the other room.'

‘Tell me one thing first,’ said Helen. ‘What would you have said to Maria?’

‘Why, it would take a long time to answer that fully,’ said Dr. Randolph; ‘but in brief, I may say, that after I had cleared up her ideas of God, I should have told her, in reference to her own needs, that what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God had done by sending his Son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin. I should have urged her, without thinking of what she did feel or what she did not feel, to lay open her heart unreservedly to Him.’

CHAPTER VIII.

CONVERSATION.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE FALL
AND ITS EFFECTS.

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.
In Memoriam.

THESE remarks furnished Helen with abundant material for thought, and she now longed intensely for an opportunity of laying open to Dr. Randolph her own share in the difficulties which had been touched upon. But her dread of being thought egotistical, to be which she was aware her unhappiness predisposed her, might have long kept her back from speaking, had not he guessed what was in her mind and anticipated her.

‘You were saying the other day,’ said he, when a convenient opportunity occurred for getting her alone, ‘you were saying that many of the difficulties felt by that little girl in Abbott’s book had been yours. Have you still difficulties of that kind?’

‘Oh! yes.’

‘Do you feel sufficient confidence in me to let me discuss them with you?’

'I should only be too glad to do so. I perceive that in some respects your opinions are not precisely what I have been accustomed to.'

'Have you anything particularly on your mind?'

'Yes. You mentioned, as an instance of erroneous teaching, that Maria had been told it would have been just if we had all been left to perish for the sin of Adam. Original sin is one of my greatest stumbling-blocks.'

'What do you mean by Original sin?'

'I mean the doctrine that in consequence of Adam's sin his posterity came into the world under God's wrath, and exposed to the punishment of eternal death.'

'That is Augustine's doctrine. He, in the Pelagian controversy, laid down the proposition, 'As all men have sinned in Adam, they are justly exposed to the vengeance of God, because of this hereditary sin and guilt of sin.' '*

'I did not know it was Augustine's, but I have read and heard this statement many times.'

'Does Mr. Seymour teach this?'

'Not very clearly; but he always assumes it. He seems not to like to dwell upon it.'

'No, very few in modern times would dare to speak out as plainly as Augustine did. But this is not all that is meant by original sin.'

* See Hagenbach's *History of Doctrines*, Vol. I. CLARK'S *Theological Library*.

‘Oh! no; it is likewise said that part of the penalty on Adam was spiritual death, the corruption and depravity of his nature, which penalty also extends to his descendants, and brings in its train eternal death.’

‘That, again, is the doctrine of Augustine. According to him, not only was physical death a punishment inflicted upon Adam and all his posterity, but he looked upon original sin itself as being in some sense a punishment of the first transgression, though it was a real sin (God punishing sin by sin), and could therefore be imputed to every individual.’

‘That is just what I have been taught.’

‘Now does it not strike you, Miss Tyrrel, that these dry hard propositions are not like truths, which, as Arnold says in one of his sermons, we can make a part of our mind’s food? constantly judging of and feeling towards ourselves as they would make us feel? They are doctrines which must be forced on the mind; learned by rote, retained by memory. They never can become a part of ourselves. No one ever feels himself to blame for Adam’s sin, or for having a sinful nature; and I hold it a true principle that that only is sin which can be recognised by an honest conscience.’

‘But yet does not the Epistle to the Romans teach that in Adam all have sinned?’

‘I must tell you that the Greek words, which are translated *in whom*, v. 12, are now more generally rendered *for that, because of that*. *In whom* was

Augustine's interpretation, but it is now considered an exegetical error.'

'Still there is another text in the same chapter, 'By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.''

'But there is a great difference in saying that one man has been the occasion of sin to many, and saying that they had actually a part in his sin, or are implicated in it by some sort of 'legal fiction.' There can be no doubt, however, that the whole passage assumes that we are sufferers by Adam's sin, but this must be explained in agreement with that great principle laid down in the Book of Ezekiel, 'The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.' I will give you my view of the doctrine of the Fall, and of original sin. First, however, I must premise that the origin of evil is a yet unfathomed mystery. How a sinless nature originates sinfulness,—how sin could arise independent of God, is what we cannot explain, and it in no respect lessens the difficulty—only removes it a step further back—to say it was Satan tempted our first parents, because the question recurs, Who tempted Satan?

'Certainly,' said Helen; 'that is what I have often thought.'

'The mystery of the Fall has been deepened by the exaggerated notions people have entertained

about the primitive state of man. They describe it as if it were identical with that higher state to which we look forward as the final perfection of the new creature in Christ. They picture our first parents with incorruptible bodies, and souls adorned with all imaginable perfections, and in this case it would be perfectly inconceivable how they should have yielded to the temptation. But in my opinion their state, though one of *innocence*, was an imperfect state—a state of unconscious instinctive goodness—something like that of childhood. And I believe they were intended to work their way up through obedience, and resistance to temptation—not probably to one temptation only, but to the temptation of life—to a higher state of development, in which their descendants would have participated. This higher state, I think, was what the tempter meant when he assured Eve that by complying with his suggestions they would be as gods, and the sin to which he tempted her was the snatching at the reward without the conflict. One does not know whether she had a distinct idea of the connexion between obedience and exaltation; probably not, for, as we were saying the other day, nothing really good can spring merely from the hope of personal reward. But at any rate, her sin was a determination to have something independent of the will of God, a distrust of His infinite liberality—principles which, I believe, are at the root of most sins now. She attained, indeed, by eating the forbidden fruit, a more advanced stage of development; she knew

good and evil, but she knew it in the way in which Schiller warns us not to seek it, and reaped no benefit from it.

Weh Dem der zu Wahrheit geht durch Schuld
Sie wird ihm nimmermehr erfreulich seyn.*

‘I have proceeded thus far on the supposition that the account in Genesis is to be taken as a literal narrative of facts, but I suppose you are aware that even as early as the time of Origen it was looked upon by some as symbolical.’

‘No, indeed; I never had an idea that it was so regarded.’

‘Some features of it are evidently symbolical, but I believe it to be a real narrative, and in either case the inferences I have drawn would hold, since if it is symbolical it is symbolical of corresponding facts. But now as to the consequences of the sin—the propagation of its effects beyond the first sinners. As Keble says—

’Twas but one little drop of sin
We saw this morning enter in.
And lo! at eventide, the world is drowned.

We know so little of the history of our first parents, that we cannot trace very well the effects of their sin upon their characters, nor upon the training of their children. It is a question which, I think,

* Woe to him who gains truth through guilt, it will never gladden him.—*Der Verschleierte Bild zu Sais.*

has never yet been satisfactorily settled, whether moral character is strictly *hereditary*? whether it is transmitted by natural descent, or whether it is formed solely by association; but from one or both of these causes it seems a general law that particular races, nations, and families shall exhibit a particular type of character. Especially is this seen where tribes of men are isolated and confined to intercourse with their own stock, as the human race must have been in those early times; moral as well as physical peculiarities then come out very strongly. By the operation of natural laws I think we may account for the propagation of a sinful nature, without supposing it was laid on us as an arbitrary punishment. And I see traces that the master-sin thus transmitted was that which I have mentioned—a distrust of God's goodness, and a consequent determination to snatch at advantages, without waiting to receive them from Him. Now the evil conscience engendered by every act of sin would tend still more to weaken faith in God's willingness to make man happy, and strengthen the supposed necessity of selfish solicitude. By-and-bye, this self-seeking would come into collision with the self-seeking of others; passion would overpower reason; might would become right, and so things might go on till the earth was full of violence.'

'What, then, do you consider was really denounced to Adam and extended to his race? Natural death, of course?'

'Yes; but as said a little while ago, I think it a fallacy to suppose that the first man had that incor-

ruptible undying nature which is to be the portion of the redeemed hereafter. St. Paul says, 'The first man is of the earth earthy;' and in the sentence on Adam it is said, Dust thou *art*. As far as we can see, if there had been no sin to punish, there must have been some method of transplantation, for successive generations of men could not have found room on this earth. As I said before, if man had stood his trial, he would probably have won that higher and spiritual nature, that life which St. Paul speaks of as now derived through Christ, and of this the Tree of Life seems to have been the symbol. There would not have been those painful and melancholy circumstances which are now connected with removal, and from which nature shrinks. But I consider sickness, death, labour, and the other evils threatened in the curse, though obviously intended to mark the Divine displeasure against the actual transgressors, yet viewed in their aspect towards the altered prospects of the race, rather in the light of blessings than curses, since they have been the most effectual restraints upon human depravity, and the most effectual teachers of man's dependence on God.'

'That is very true,' said Helen.

'In fact, it appears,' said Dr. Randolph, 'that immediately after the Fall, man was treated with reference to the redemption of Christ. Had it not been for this the offenders would probably have literally died on that very day, according to the words of the warning: 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' They had separated

themselves from God, they had chosen to be the architects of their own destiny ; and separate from God the creature *must* sink and die.'

'There have been times,' said Helen, sighing, 'when it has almost seemed to me as if it would have been more merciful if the sentence had taken its course.'

'What a dreadful thought, Miss Tyrrel! Think what would have been lost—the glory of the Cross !'

'But then to think of the multitudes who will after all perish.'

'And what know we of that? let us wait till we see the end. I have a great deal more to say to you on this subject if you can give me a little more time another day.'

'Most thankfully,' said Helen.

'Only I must beg you to recollect that in what I have said to-day, or what I may yet say, I do not pretend that I have got the right solution of questions which have perplexed holy men so long. I believe our clearest views here are only an approximation to truth. You must take mine for what they are worth.'

Helen was not long in claiming Dr. Randolph's offer of further conversation. Her mind was in a complete thicket of conflicting opinions, and she was impatient to see her way through them.

Seated in the study, which had now become to her, familiar ground, she began—

'From several things you have said, especially when you were commenting on Payson's conversations, I imagine you would not agree with Mr.

Seymour as to the actual depravity of human nature.'

'As to the intense hatefulness of its developments, I think no one could well feel more strongly than I. My soul is sick when I think of the annals of religious persecution—of the atrocities of the slave trade—of West Indian and American slavery. But respecting the sources and nature of this depravity, I should probably differ widely from Mr. Seymour. In their anxiety to magnify Divine grace, theologians have gone far to destroy the sense of man's accountability, and all their attempts to undo what they have done, and persuade people they are guilty of what they could not help, appear to me utterly futile. But this is, after all, matter of fact, and may be tested by one's own consciousness. Now, I think no one really feels himself to be nothing but evil, and that continually, however he may think it becoming and right to speak of himself in the language which was used of the hardened sinners of the old world, who had filled up the measure of their iniquities. St. Paul's view of the matter is, that there are two principles striving in man for the mastery—the flesh and the spirit. There is, as I understand the case, a divine principle in the soul, which loves and approves of goodness, longs to be good, and is good in itself; which not only approves things that are excellent, but is capable of love—of disinterestedness—of self-sacrifice. This is God's image in the soul, and exists, I believe, in all—though in very different degrees of develop-

ment. There is also the selfish principle—the flesh, as St. Paul calls it—which is solely concerned for its own welfare and enjoyment; it may seek its interest in different ways—some just and reasonable, others quite the contrary—it may be rational or sensual, but it is self still; and though a natural element of man's constitution, it belongs to our lower nature. It does not love or hate with reference to things as they are themselves, but as they affect our own individual happiness.—Well, it appears to me that the depravity of our nature—I mean its inherent depravity—greatly consists in the disproportionate strength and activity of this principle, and the consequent stifling, repression, and, in cases of obstinate wickedness, the apparent destruction of the higher principle. As I said before, I can trace a little the way in which this fleshly principle established its usurpation. When men had sinned, they began to distrust God, to look upon him as one who would not—or at least might not—give them what they wanted; and then they thought it needful to take care of themselves—they must manage their own destiny. This all strengthened self, and kept down disinterested love. But they found they were dependent creatures, and must have a superior to help them; and then they began to seek for gods who could be coaxed or bribed, and here comes in superstition and idolatry; and even in Christian times, nay, even in our own time, I am sorry to say men's conceptions of God have not been free from these ancient errors. But in proportion as these

false notions prevailed, in the same proportion was the divine principle overlaid. Now and then it might spring to life and assert its supremacy, as it did in some of the noble acts of self-devotion recorded in Greek and Roman history, but for the most part, and in the most men, it is a latent principle encrusted over with the thick coating of self. To use a forcible image I once heard employed, it is like the reptile enclosed by some accident in the trunk of a tree, till one day unexpectedly 'the axe comes and cleaves the wood—the light and air penetrate, and reach the captive—the lungs expand—the thing steps forth a living creature, proving that *that* was not its atmosphere, but that its atmosphere was God's glorious heaven.'

'How beautiful!' said Helen. 'Was that intended as a description of regeneration?'

'Of that deliverance described in the words: 'If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.' That change which takes place when the spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, sets him free from the law of sin and death. But there is a kind of transition state, which St. Paul notices in those remarkable words: 'I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived and I died.' It is when the conscience and moral principle, which have been slumbering in this chrysalis state, are aroused, and begin to struggle and protest against the domination of the selfish principle,—then is verified that remarkable fact, that not only does opposition to our inclinations make them more vehement, but also that the very fixing the

attention on a particular one, even with the view to extirpate it, proves an incitement to its commission. Have you never remarked this?

‘I think I have.’

‘The statistics of crime remarkably show it. When any great or unusual form of crime is committed and made public, so that general attention is fixed upon it, other similar cases are almost sure to occur. But to go back to what I was saying; when the conflict between flesh and spirit becomes intensified, the sense of being in captivity to a law of sin is felt with more or less distinctness, and something like St. Paul’s cry arises in the soul, ‘O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?’ &c. Teachers with Dr. Payson’s views would, I suppose, look upon this as something merely *natural*, and therefore worthless. That is the way at least in which poor Maria was silenced, when a very similar cry seems to have burst from her heart. But I believe this brings the captive within the range of the promises, ‘Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find.’ It may be unconscious asking, but is it not said that when we know not what we should pray for as we ought, the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered’?

• ‘Certainly,’ said Helen, ‘it would be a great relief to think that the nature of man is not such as that he cannot choose but sin, and subject himself to the penalty of eternal death. But I have always been taught, that though we may perhaps do some things that are right, yet the law demands

perfect unsinning obedience, and visits every failure with its unfailing recompence. And is not this view substantiated by that text: 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them'?

'The Apostle uses that declaration to shew the Galatians their mistake in trying to make their Christian position more secure by adding to it the Mosaic observances. He tells them that they cannot pick and choose, but must take the law as a whole, if they had it at all; and that then they would be certain to incur condemnation for failure somewhere or other.

'Is not that saying the same thing; that we are not able to keep the law, and yet are exposed to its curse?'

'Let us leave the case of those who were seeking to use the law for a purpose for which it was not given—namely, as a means of justification—and let us come to the case of human beings in general. The perfect law of God—the perfect standard of right for his creatures—is pure, un-deviating obedience to the will of God. Now this is, indeed, the absolute rule of right; and I believe if all were intended to stand or fall by their conformity to it, it would be made known externally or internally to all mankind. But on the contrary, we find that there are nations and tribes of men who know nothing of the true God—the only God whom it is right and possible to love. Are they condemned for not loving him? Could you by any possibility make them understand that they were

guilty and deserving of eternal misery for not having right feelings towards Him of whom they knew nothing? You could not! And there are many, unhappily, in the streets and cellars of our great cities, who are in a state quite as low. To all such I believe we may apply the words of St. Paul, in speaking of the heathen of his own day: 'The times of this ignorance God winked at.' Though *absolutely* the law is perfection, *relatively* to every man it is the best he can; and for failure in this alone you can convict him of guilt. Now, we know very well that in numberless instances we have not acted up to our own sense of duty, we have cherished feelings that we know, and knew at the time, to be wrong; and the very feeling of self-reproach with which we look back upon this, involves in it the consciousness, that though a better course might have been *very* difficult—*very* painful—yet it was not impossible. Many hindrances, which appeared to us insuperable at the time, in the retrospect of remorse we feel were no sufficient excuses. You have felt that, I dare say?

'Oh, yes; I remember once suffering myself to be deterred from going to see a poor old servant of ours who was dying. The weather was very bad; I was not well, and very much indisposed for exertion. I satisfied myself that I was quite justified in putting off the visit. I went the next day: she was dead—and I found that she had asked for me several times, and seemed much disappointed that I had not come. I cannot tell you how I reproached myself. All the excuses I had made seemed so

trifling; I saw plainly that the real hindrance was my idleness and want of feeling. Even to the present day, though it happened when I was quite young, I do not think of it without pain.

‘I dare say not; I have had many such experiences, and, if in taking account of our sins we looked at such things, instead of going at once to the higher spiritual duties, we should be more likely to get a just view of our guilt.’

‘Do you think that every sin deserves eternal death?’

‘I do not know what it may deserve; I believe we ourselves, in self-indignation, hardly set any bounds to our own deserts; but I do not think we are authorized to speak of God’s law as like the laws of Draco, who denounced death against every offence, because he said the smallest deserved it, and he knew of nothing higher for the greatest. Eternal death is the award of final obdurate hardness of heart—such as that sin against the Holy Ghost—of which our Lord said that it would not be forgiven either in this world or the world to come. In every wilful sin, indeed, we take a step towards this.’

‘But are we not told that no sin could have been remitted except through the sufferings of Christ? and are we not then in every sin guilty of the death of the Saviour?’

‘That belongs to a very difficult and important subject, on which I should like to have a thorough talk with you, but not to-day; we have not time.

Will you come to me to-morrow, if you are not otherwise engaged?

'I will. It is very, very kind of you to give up so much time to me. You do not know how much good it does me to hear you explain these difficulties, which have long weighed heavily on my mind.'

'If I can lighten their burden by a feather's weight, I shall be richly rewarded.'

CHAPTER IX.

CONVERSATION.—REDEMPTION.

The Gospel is the great absolution of the race.—MAURICE.

The essence and consummation of love is self-sacrifice for the purification of its object.—ARCHDEACON HARE.

THE next morning, before Helen had set out to go to Dr. Randolph, he came in.

‘I forgot when I asked you to come this morning, that it would be St. Matthew’s day: I am going to read prayers at St. Peter’s. Will you walk with me? We can perhaps have our talk going and returning.’

Helen gladly prepared herself, and they set off.

‘You were asking me yesterday,’ said Dr. Randolph, as soon as they had got clear of the little town, ‘whether in each sin we ought not to feel that we are guilty of the death of Christ? I think that was something like what you said.’

‘Yes.’

‘But how is it possible to feel that, since it is not true? At least we cannot tell but that if we, individually, had never been born or never sinned, the same sacrifice would have been offered.’

‘That is what has so often perplexed me; and I must confess to you that I have never been able

to feel it, though I have often read in religious books exhortations to repentance grounded on this idea.'

'So have I; but I cannot think they ever succeed in their aim. This notion is a part of that view of the work of Christ which represents him as literally bearing the punishment due to every sin of every man. Is that your view?'

'Yes—something like it. Mr. Seymour would not say, indeed, that He bore the whole of the penalty, because that would have been eternal death; but that His nature being infinite, his sufferings had an infinite value, and were in fact an equivalent to the punishment which would otherwise have been inflicted upon every sinner. I scarcely know whether I state it correctly; for I confess I have never been able to understand how it could be.'

'This doctrine of equivalents is hard to grasp indeed. And does it not seem to you very much to obscure the Divine mercy? There is, in fact, no remission of the penalty; an exact equivalent is demanded. The only difference is, that it is paid by the innocent instead of the guilty.'

'Oh, yes; I have often felt that when I have listened to statements of the doctrine. Instead of conveying to my mind an idea of the love of God, the impression produced has been of a Being of implacable severity—almost delighting in suffering for its own sake. I know such thoughts are very shocking, and I would not repeat them to any one else.'

‘You have thought of God, I suppose, as a Being who, as has been said, *‘willeth the death of a sinner, but who may be persuaded by certain methods to give up that will, and to sell him forgiveness.’*’*

‘I have so often wondered how persons could bring themselves to admire and rejoice in this view. I never could derive any comfort from the thought that another had suffered for me. It would be a dreadful idea, I think, if we could realize it, and, at the same time, separate Him who endured from Him who inflicted the punishment.’

‘And there is another objection to the view,’ said Dr. Randolph, ‘that where the idea is brought forward very distinctly of Christ’s suffering the wrath of God in the stead of sinners, the effect is to represent God as a severe judge, and to transfer any feelings of love or gratitude which may be excited, to the Redeemer.’

‘Yes, that is very true,’ said Helen. ‘I have often heard the story of Zaleucus cited as an illustration of the case.’

‘I suppose so. It is a favourite instance. But the rude attempt of a barbarian king to reconcile his judicial duty with his parental feelings is very ill calculated to illustrate the perfect government of God. All that the conduct of Zaleucus could do was to impress upon his subjects the certainty of being punished for a similar offence. But to rule by terror is by no means the Divine method,

* Maurice’s *Sermons on the Prayer Book*.

though I must say it is the weapon apparently most relied on in many modern pulpits.'

'What, then,' said Helen, 'is your view of the nature of the Atonement?'

'I will tell you when we come out of church; only I must beg you to remember that with relation to this great and sacred subject, we may most especially be said to know but in part; we must beware of dogmatizing where we ought rather to adore. Half the harsh, mechanical representations which have been given of this great fact, have, in my opinion, resulted from treating passages of Scripture expressive of warm, gushing feeling, as if they formed part of a legal document.'

They had now reached the church, and went in. When the service was over, Dr. Randolph proposed to Helen, as the day was calm and beautiful, to extend their walk a little, and they sauntered on along the lane and into the open country.

'Closely affecting the subject of which we have been speaking,' said Dr. Randolph, 'is the Christian idea of punishment. In the ancient world this took pre-eminently the idea of vengeance. The destruction of the criminal was its predominating object. With us, under the influence of Christianity, punishment is viewed in a milder, calmer light. We exclude from it the idea of personal vindictiveness, and look upon it, first, as designed for the *security of society*; secondly, for the *reformation of the offender*. To this I think ought to be added a third view, quite as important, but more often left out of sight,—an *expression of*

righteous indignation against crime. When some notorious offender, some base, cruel tyrant, escapes punishment, we are sensible of a kind of violence done to our feelings of justice; we are pained, quite irrespectively of any ill consequences we may suppose likely to result to society. Even in a book, you know, we are fond of poetical justice. It is not that we want the destruction of the offender, but we want to assert a principle. Let us look at this a little more closely. When any great crime has been committed—say, for instance, that a poor, helpless orphan has been beaten and starved to death by its parent—a slave cruelly tortured by his master—or even an unoffending animal tormented by a human brute—we are conscious of an earnest desire that the criminal should be visited with an adequate measure of punishment. It is not that we have any delight in his suffering for its own sake, but we want the expression of *justice*, we want the connexion between crime and suffering to be clearly seen. We want the offender himself to see this, not merely for his own good, but as a homage to Right, and if he could be punished without knowing what it was for, we should not be at all satisfied. Now, this desire for retributive justice is, I think, a reflection of the divine image in our souls. We feel that God must abhor wickedness, and we do not at all wish that he should be indifferent to it. Do you see this?

‘Yes, I do. But then suppose the criminal

repent, and hates his sin as much as we do, would it be right still to wish that he should suffer?

‘That is the question. Human laws, of course, take no notice of repentance, partly because they never can know that it is sincere and adequate. But if we could certainly know this, I still think that though we might not wish that the culprit should be punished in the same manner and to the same extent as if he were callous—though he will have done homage in some degree to Right—yet I think we should hardly be satisfied that he should escape all the consequences of his crime, and be restored to all the respect and all the advantages he might have enjoyed if he had not committed it. Nay, I think his own feelings, if he were penitent, would be against this. It would be a moral torture to him. He does not forgive himself, and here is an intimation that he ought not. His feelings witness to the eternal demerit of sin. Now, would he be at all more satisfied by having his crime expiated by the sufferings of another? Or would that satisfy the moral sense of the community? I think not, because it would involve a sense of injustice in the governor who should permit it; nor would it alter the case if those sufferings were voluntarily undertaken. Such a substitution might make an impression, indeed, that when wrong is done, *somebody* must suffer for it, but not that when wrong is done the *wrong doer* must suffer for it.

‘But if the offender were restored, and his offence

forgiven for the sake of the eminent services of some relative, or some generous friend, who took him under his patronage, the effect on feeling would, I think, be quite another thing. There would be a sense of the ennobling and redeeming power of true goodness, and the transference of personal responsibility would be elevating instead of degrading to the sinner; for whilst a benefit obtained through the punishment of another appeals to a selfish feeling, a benefit obtained as a reward to another, appeals to a feeling of generous admiration.

‘Now, then, we have to contemplate the case of the whole human race as having sinned and come short of the glory of God. God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. But he must turn from his wickedness; for the foolish shall not stand in God’s sight—He hateth all workers of iniquity. He has infinite pity for His rebellious children, but He recognises evil as evil, as that which stands in opposition to His holiness, as that which resists His holy order, and seeks to be independent of Him. The first, the indispensable condition, then, of reconciliation with God is repentance. When this takes place, when the prodigal comes to himself, and there is found in his soul the confession, ‘Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son,’ I believe we have in the reception of the father a model of God’s forgiveness. ‘And when he was yet a great way off, his

father saw him and, had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' No other views of the nature of the Gospel ought to be allowed to trouble in our minds this beautiful image of God's absolute forgiveness. 'And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them all.'

'Then it would seem,' said Helen, 'as if repentance were all that is necessary, and as if the chief end of the Gospel would be to call men to repentance.'

'It is one great end, but not the chief end,' replied Dr. Randolph. 'In the repentance of the sinner two of the ends of punishment are forestalled—his own reformation and the security of society—at least as far as his individual agency is concerned; but the third end is not satisfied. There is hardly a sufficient assertion of the essential difference between good and evil, if the consequences of sin are entirely obliterated, and the sinner, immediately on his repentance, restored to his former position. There was a something of *justice* though nothing of *generosity* in the remonstrance of the elder son in the Parable of the Prodigal; and though God has a right to do what He will with His own, one may be sure that He will never suffer the slightest suspicion of unfairness to rest on any of His dealings.'

'Then on this account, probably,' suggested Helen, 'it was necessary that Christ should bear the wrath due to the sinner.'

'It is difficult to conceive,' said Dr. Randolph, 'how the sufferings of a perfectly holy and innocent

being in the stead of another, could be adapted to produce that impression of the essential distinction between good and evil, and eternal demerit of sin which we are supposing needed, because *guilt* is a thing in its own nature intransferable,—it is not like a *debt*, to which it is sometimes improperly compared. It may be indifferent to a creditor from whom he receives his money provided it be paid in full, but it ought not to be indifferent to a sovereign, in a higher moral state than Dionysius, whether Damon or Pythias be put to death for the offence of Damon. But it is conceivable that there should be another way of re-instating man without injuring the interests of holiness. Even Dionysius found out a better way, when, instead of exacting the quantum of suffering due to the culprit, for the sake of the self-devotion of one, and the generosity of the other, he let both go free. Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God. He took on him the human nature with all its trials, temptations, hardships, sufferings—not self-sought sufferings—not sufferings arbitrarily inflicted by His Father, but grounded on the actual condition of the nature He had taken, and yet sufferings from which he might at any moment have withdrawn Himself.* He emptied himself of His glory, ‘made Himself of no reputation, took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and be-

* John xii. 27; Matth. xxvi. 53.

came obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' He glorified God on the earth, He finished the work which was given Him to do, and, as the *final test of the surrender of private will to the will of God*, he submitted to death in one of its most agonizing and ignominious forms. For this He well deserves the reward of raising his brethren out of their fallen condition and obliterating the stigma of their sin. Though in themselves most unworthy, yet must the worthiness of their Head for ever silence all objections.'

After the pause of a few minutes Dr. Randolph resumed: 'Do you see the distinction between my view and that which you have intimated as Mr. Seymour's?'

'I hardly know; I think I have a glimmering of it.'

'In the view which you have been accustomed to, the *worth* of the atonement is in the *sufferings* of Christ; in my view it is in the *perfect exhibition of self-sacrifice* and the glory thereby brought to God by the illustration of His holy and loving will. The one view appeals to a selfish, the other to a self-renouncing principle—the one represents guilt as compensated by the endurance of an equivalent, the other as remitted for the sake of a virtue victorious in the sharpest trials.

'But is it not strange,' said Helen, 'that except as a punishment, God should have appointed or required such trials—such a death?'

'Not if we consider the import of those words, 'Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience

by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.' The truth is here written out, that only through the cross comes the crown, and in this mould the church is cast. 'If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me.' 'Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, &c.' The cross of Jesus teaches us the lesson, that suffering is nothing weighed against the manifestation of moral glory. Does this view commend itself to your judgment?

'I can hardly say; I must have time to think it over. But if it be the right one—if it is really borne out by Scripture, it would relieve my mind from a load of painful and distressing doubt.'

'You must not judge of it by isolated texts. The work of Christ is described in St. Paul's epistles by a great variety of figures, none of which ought to be pressed too closely, because they generally have a reference to some particular object.'

'When it is said, for instance, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. He was made sin for us who knew no sin; Who His ownself bare our sins in His body on the tree, &c.,' the special image arises out of something in the context. The general meaning seems to be, that He was subjected to the treatment of a malefactor, that through this suffering He might achieve a name through which whosoever believeth in him may receive remission of sins.'

‘But it is a very low view of the work of Christ to look upon it, as it is too often looked upon, as a mere deliverance from wrath. The Gospel is far too much preached as if it were merely a way of escape from hell. Christ came not only to restore man to a state of safety, but to raise the human nature to its original ideal. The frequent parallel drawn between Adam and Christ indicates this. The first man failed in his trial, the second came through victorious, and in him we become heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together. For this high and heavenly state, this perfection of our nature, for which it was originally designed, He is educating us by all the discipline of life and the secret communications of his Spirit. And there appears to me, in this Headship of Christ, a remarkable preservative against that great tendency of human nature, self-seeking. While on the one hand the worthiness of Christ gives hope to the soul dismayed at the sense of its own unworthiness, on the other it checks that merely selfish and prudential kind of religion, which prompted Peter to ask, ‘What shall we have, therefore?’ Our present standing, our future hopes, rest not upon our own doings, but on our relation to Him who is the root of the new humanity. We are justified by *faith*; that is, when we put ourselves into His hands, God accepts in us not what we are, but what He is, and what He is the pledge that we shall be. Do you understand me?’

‘I think I do. But this coming to Christ—this closing with Christ, has always been one of my great difficulties.’

‘How so?’

‘Why, there seemed such an impassable barrier, so much preparatory work to be done before one could be certain one had the right faith.’

‘What do you mean by preparatory work?’

‘Why, more particularly conviction of sin. I have tried and thought, and meditated and prayed—oh! I cannot convey to you how much—but I have never had those convictions which I was led to suppose necessary, and which in all books of experience people seemed to have.’

‘Such, I suppose, as that every sin deserved eternal punishment; that every sin required an expiation; and that nothing less than the blood of Christ could have sufficed—with other equally impossible feelings?’

‘Yes.’

‘Well, from what I have said, you may gather what is my judgment as to the needlessness of striving after such views. I do not mean to say that no one has ever had them, but they pertain, in fact, to a state of strong excitement, and are no more the sound *habitual* tone of Christian experience than that expression borrowed from St. Paul in a popular hymn, ‘What though of sinners I’m the chief,’ &c. But if they were ever so reasonable and so consistent with truth, you never could have attained them by striving after them as a something essential to salvation. No one could

possibly gain conviction of, or contrition for, sin, by seeking it for an ulterior object. It must spring up in the heart spontaneously, and be excited by a sense of the sin itself, not by any view of the duty and importance of feeling it. Payson shows that clearly enough. So you see you might have gone on for ever with these efforts, without making the least way; first, because, as I think, you were seeking false and exaggerated views, and secondly, because you were seeking them in an impracticable method.'

'What, then, ought I to have done?'

'You should have come to Christ at once, without waiting for any supposed qualifications.'

'I have tried that many times,' rejoined Helen; 'but when I found that I had no deeper feelings of contrition, and that I had not that lively gratitude which others seemed to feel, I was discouraged, and concluded that I had not come aright.'

'The fact was, dear Miss Tyrrel, all your best feelings were choked up by the harsh unlovely character of the theology you had imbibed. Gratitude cannot be felt by an ingenuous mind for a benefit which is conferred at the expense of its sense of right. And besides, in all these attempts, you were evidently watching your own mind too much. It was impossible you should have the feelings you desired till you were carried beyond yourself.'

Helen mused awhile, then said, 'Ideas similar to these have often floated on my mind, but I knew not what to do. I think I have sometimes been almost conscious of a wish that I had been guilty

of some great sin, that so I might have been forced into repentance.'

'That shows forcibly,' rejoined Dr. Randolph, 'the pernicious effect of holding out to the young and comparatively innocent, set patterns of conversion. It is almost sure to tempt them to a kind of self-deception.'

'I think, too,' added Helen, 'that if I could have worked myself up to anything like contrition, I should have thought better of myself for it.'

'It would have been no genuine contrition then; self-condemnation and self-complacency mutually exclude each other.'

'Sometimes,' resumed Helen, 'I used to think that the greatest sin of all was not to feel sin, and that that might warrant me to go to the Saviour; but when I went, and remained just the same, I was as hopeless as ever.'

'Remained just the same,' I suppose, relates to your feelings about your own guilt?'

'Yes; I found God did not answer my prayer and give me a new heart.'

'A new heart, modelled on the plan which you had set before you, could not have been given without destroying the best qualities of your nature, and you may well thank Him for that, you may well bless him that he did not allow you to take up with low dishonourable notions of Him and His salvation.'

'I do bless him for that,' said Helen, with sudden feeling. 'A ray of truth has beamed upon

me this day which I never saw before. But what ought I to do now ?

‘Do? oh! my dear Miss Tyrrel, do banish the dreadful idea that salvation has, as it were, to be wrung from an unwilling hand. Only believe that God is seeking you much more than you are seeking Him; only tell Him that you are willing to be and to do everything that He would have you, and trust to Him for the rest. The first unreserved confession—be it of sin, be it of want, be it of desire—the first casting yourself on the power, the love, the worthiness of Christ, places you within the circle of His advocacy, and as a little child you enter the kingdom of God.’

In the course of conversation they had turned towards Broadstairs, and were now at the head of the village street. They walked on in silence till they reached the Parade, and then with one earnest shake of the hand they separated.

CHAPTER X.

A NEW CREATURE

It marks nobility, when thoughts which thrill
 Throughout our being mould another's will;
 When wit or humour, playing from our brain,
 Or poetry's subdued but sweeter strain,
 Stirs up emotions in the general mind,
 As trees are stirred by the resistless wind;
 But, oh, it speaks a nobler power, by far,
 To touch the seat where our affections are—
 To calm the heart—to find a lodgment where
 Of old sat doubt, or sorrow, or despair,
 Till the enfranchised spirit breathes once more,
 As spirits breathe upon a holier shore.

Poems by JOHN DENNIS.

In knowledge of Whom standeth our eternal life—Whose
 service is perfect freedom.

Second Collect for Morning Prayer.

HELEN went home that day with the feelings of
 one who has just gained possession of a prize,
 the worth of which he has not had time to scrutinize,
 —like one who comes unawares on a treasure hid,
 and for joy thereof goeth and hideth it. For the
 first time in her life a perception of the reality of
 God's love had dawned upon her soul. For the
 first time she felt that He has a real interest in the
 happiness and perfection of His creatures, such as a
 father has in his children. And this of itself was
 like the opening into a new world, for 'to know

God as a Father, to feel him as a Father, this is spiritual religion.'

It was several days before she saw Dr. Randolph again, as he went up to town the morning after the walk to St. Peter's. During his absence she went over again in her mind the various subjects on which they had talked together, especially his views of the Great Sacrifice. The more she thought over them the more did they commend themselves to her heart and understanding, the more courage did she gain to free herself from the oppressive chains which had hitherto fettered her religious life. Now she began to trust God, to confide in his love; and to feel that it was not something which required to be translated into a language different from that of human significance. Now, too, she could value and feel the worth of a perfect Mediator.

The morning after Dr. Randolph's return she met him on the Parade, and by his invitation turned and walked with him on the North Foreland road. She did not say much of her own feelings, for, as has been said, she was backward in talking of herself. But he intuitively guessed her state of mind.

'We have not met,' said he, 'since the day we walked to St. Peter's together. Are there any questions springing out of our conversation then, which you would like to put to me?'

'There are some things,' replied Helen. 'First, I have been thinking that if it is all as easy as you describe, if one may really come to Christ without any preparatory state of mind except a desire to be saved, and if all who come are sure to be accepted,

might not some come and obtain salvation and then lead an unholy life?

‘Obtain salvation ! what kind of salvation?’

Helen hesitated.

‘The salvation which Christ has in trust for us is a complete restoration of our nature. An unholy life is a contented abiding in its debased condition ; the two cannot consist together. You see, my dear friend, you have been so much accustomed to look upon the Gospel in the narrow and partial view of an escape from hell—from the punishment of sin, rather than from sin itself. Where that is the view which is prominent in the minds of people it is necessary, no doubt, to erect a number of tests as to right kinds of faith, right convictions of sin, and so on, to prevent people fancying themselves safe when they are not so. But salvation is a full reconciliation with God—a resuming our place in God’s creation—a regeneration of character answering to our regenerated condition. I do not mean to say that a person always understands or perceives that these elements are inherent in the blessing he seeks. Many persons have very indistinct, imperfect conceptions of what they want, but as the nature of redemption unfolds itself to them, so, if they are really in earnest, do their desires unfold with it, and this, I suppose, is what the Apostle means when he prays for his friends, that they may see the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and be filled with all the fulness of God.’

‘What do you consider the crisis—the turning point of conversion?’

‘I should say the time when we first open our hearts to God. There may be a quantity of mistake,—misconception of His character, of His work, &c., but there must be faith, ‘for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.’’

‘I believe I did that long ago,’ said Helen.

‘I doubt it not, my dear friend, and I believe that you have all this while been under God’s guidance; but with the mass of depressing notions with which you have hitherto struggled, it was impossible for this little seed of faith to grow and expand as it ought to have done. Nevertheless it has been a part of your soul’s education—that education which, from the moment of our recognition as God’s children, is going on by various methods, all designed to bring us into conformity to our Head.’

‘I wanted to ask you, too,’ rejoined Helen, ‘what you think is meant by regeneration. If, as you were saying, there is even previously a remains of the divine image in the soul, how can it be called a new birth?’

‘Well, I will not perplex you with a number of nice distinctions about that. We know, by our own experience, that there is a moral nature in man, an approbation of right, a disapprobation of wrong. But this, in the natural man, is feeble, fitful, inoperative. It does not *rule* the will as it ought. But when the soul is united to Christ, a new life springs up in it. There is a feeling of confidence in God, as loving Father, a reliance on

Him which takes it off from self, makes it feel that its happiness, its interests, are safe in the hands of Christ; and that it is set free to serve God. And, by degrees, as the process of divine training goes on, there is a sympathy with the heart of Christ, a similarity of object and desire, so that there is no need to restrain the Christian with threats, or to excite him with rewards; you have but to show him what God would have him to be and to do, and of his own free will he will choose it.'

'But are not threatenings and promises often employed by the apostle, even to Christians?' said Helen.

'Yes,' said Dr. Randolph; 'because many whom St. Paul addressed were in a low state, and had entered very little into the free, frank, generous, self-sacrificing spirit of Christian life. He tells the Corinthians that he could not speak unto them as unto spiritual, but unto carnal—that he fed them with milk, and not with meat, because they were not able to bear it. This has been often taken to mean high and mysterious doctrines; but I believe it rather means elevated and enlarged views of Christian duty, 'strong claims on the soul,' as I have heard it beautifully expressed.'

'I have often wondered,' said Helen, 'why faith should be considered so important, why it should be represented as the first germ of Christian character. There does not seem anything particularly holy in believing a thing when we are convinced of its truth.'

'Faith is important in the nature of things,

because God treats us as voluntary agents; he will not save us against our will, and we cannot do another good unless we can get him to trust us, to *put faith* in us. And as to faith being the germ of Christian life, I think, if you will look at the matter a little more closely, you will see that. It is very true, that when the Gospel is represented solely in the light of an escape from future punishment, a person may believe that through Christ, they are exempted from this doom, and yet feel nothing but a kind of selfish gratitude and satisfaction with their own immunity. There is nothing very sanctifying in that. And when with this is connected the doctrine of an equivalent having been paid, and so on, there is no view of God's character to touch the higher part of our nature—the selfish principle is alone appealed to. But that which distinguishes true Christian faith from all mere prudential care for safety is, that whilst this is only excited by fear of consequences, in faith there is a feeling of the misery of sin *as such*, a weariness of estrangement from God, and a longing after a return to Him for His own sake. And this is the first manifestation of that spiritual love, which, with ever advancing footsteps, takes possession of the whole man. Do you see the difference?

'Oh, yes,' said Helen, 'and I see why so many who we have every reason to believe are in earnest in religion, have yet so little that is lovely about them.'

'They are like plants that have been nurtured in a sickly atmosphere, and kept from their proper

supply of air and light. By and bye they will be transplanted into a kindlier region, where all that is good in them will expand, and come to perfection.'

'Is it not very strange and mysterious, that they should be allowed to go on so long—some even to the end of life, in this poor stunted state?'

'Not more strange or mysterious than that the growth of Christianity in the world should have been so slow.'

'Ah, but then the life of the world is a whole, and does not terminate in any one generation; whereas, the life of an individual terminates in a very few years, and if Christian character is not developed before death—'

'It never can be, I suppose, you are going to say. But I believe that Christian character is progressive not only here, but hereafter.'

Helen thought a little. 'It may be so,' she said, and then after another pause; 'and do you think it possible, could it be, that those who have never in this life had the opportunity of knowing Christ at all, may yet have that opportunity hereafter?'

'Who shall dare affirm the contrary?' replied Dr. Randolph. 'But these are the deep things of God, with which we have nothing to do. It is my comfort to trust in the infinite love of our Father, and to believe that nothing that is precious can ever be lost. But let us leave this subject. I want to show you another of the workings of the new principle of Christian life.'

'When the Christian has received a true impression of the reality of the love of God, when he can trust Him as a child does a father, he does the will of God from the heart. God's will has become his will, partly because he delights in the very thing God would have him to do, and partly because where this is not entirely the case, he so fully loves God that he would have his will done in preference to his own. I am speaking, of course, of the natural development of the Christian principle, of the ideal rather than the actual. And in such measure as this prevails, the whole domain of life is taken, so to speak, into cultivation. There are no favoured spots marked out for religious action, bounded by outlying wastes given up to the worldly and selfish principle. And in proportion as his knowledge increases, he sees that there is nothing truly human which may not be claimed and used for the kingdom of God. You often hear religious people talk as if the chief business of a Christian, after he has made sure of his own safety, is to get through the world, having as little to do with it as possible; but this is a very contracted and ascetic view of Christian obligation. Life is ours as well as death; things present as well as things to come. But how to use life in all its relations and various circumstances so as God means it to be used, requires great wisdom and extended knowledge, and cannot be learned merely from the Bible. The Bible lays down the principles of action in all their purity, but the application of these principles to states of society so complicated

as ours, so widely different from those of the ancient world, so varying with every generation, must be learned by the help of other studies than that of Scripture. Nor do I think merely religious books, especially such as pass current in what is called the religious world, calculated to furnish us with the requisite assistance. They are too one-sided, they show things too much from one point of view. To all who have the opportunity and the capacity to master what they read, and to extract from it its nutritious principle, I would say 'let your reading be as various as possible,' avoiding, of course, all scoffing and immoral books'

'I used to be a great reader,' said Helen, 'as far as my means of getting books extended; but when I began to be anxious about religion, I laid aside all general reading, lest it should withdraw my mind from the chief concern—'

'Greatly, thereby, unfitting yourself for a healthy consideration of that one subject,—but I interrupted you.'

'I was going to add that all knowledge which merely related to worldly things, seemed to me so vain and useless. But I see now what a mistake I made.'

'Why, as Arnold argues in one of his admirable sermons, 'Undoubtedly that is useless which does not enable a man to glorify God better in his way through life, but then we are called upon to glorify him in many various ways according to our several callings and circumstances; and as we are to glorify him both in our bodies and in our spirits, with all

our faculties, both outward and inward, I cannot consider it unworthy either to render our body strong and active, or our understanding clear, rich, versatile, in its powers; I cannot reject from the range of religious education, whatever ministers to the perfection of our bodies and our minds, so long as both in body and mind, in soul and spirit, we ourselves may be taught to minister to the service of God.”*

‘By means such as these is acquired that *sound mind* of which St. Paul speaks, and which is of so great importance in dealing with human relations. We daily see how much harm is done by people with the best intentions, yet deficient in enlightened judgment.’

‘Would you advise me,’ said Helen, ‘to turn my attention to general literature?’

‘Not perhaps immediately, because you have had new views, new thoughts suggested to your mind; and you will want time to turn them over and convert them into the material of daily life and feeling; but when your mind is free to ask the question, how you may best serve God, I think you will find that a more extended cultivation of the mind will be a great practical help to its solution. And in the mean time I would say, Come and study German with Agnes, it will be a great pleasure to her; in the commencement it will be a study of words rather than thoughts; and once gained, that language will

* Serm. xvi., Vol. III.

be a great treasure. I have often wished I could refer you to passages in the excellent works of Neander in corroboration of some of my statements, I mean particularly the *Leben Jesu*, and *Der Pflanzung und Leitung der Christlichen Kirche*.*

‘I should like it of all things,’ said Helen; ‘but I am so apt to be run away with by a new study.’

‘Oh, well never mind that; you will right yourself again after a time; and a change of ideas is healthful and promotes the main end.’

‘Perhaps there is not so much danger now to me as there might have been, for I feel that nothing can ever rival the interest of the subjects I have talked on with you.’

‘Well, then, I will tell Agnes she may expect you for your first lesson to-morrow.’

* There are now translations of these works in BOHNS’ *Standard Library*.

CHAPTER XI.

PARTING ADVICE.

No revelation of duty is possible except through the conscience, and conscience cannot be effectually reached but by the presence of a holier life and higher spirit. From the spectacle of devoted excellence and saintly beauty of mind, as from nothing else, flashes down upon us the awful and redeeming sense of new obligation; the thing seen in the concrete becomes conviction in the abstract, and a religion lived passes into a religion believed. And so we regard it as a rule in matters of devout faith, that it is reverence for persons which gives perception of truth in ideas.

WILSON'S *Bampton Lectures*.

THE German lessons began from this time, and went on vigorously throughout the month in which the two families remained together at Broadstairs. Over and above their own value, they had the effect of cementing a close friendship between Helen and Agnes. They began to understand each other. Agnes had soon discovered that the little peculiarities of manner and opinion, which had at first repelled her in Helen, were not natural, but imparted; and as they gradually melted away beneath the influence of more kindly views, and her naturally truthful and ardent mind had leave to expand itself, unnumbered points of sympathy sprang up between them.'

The change in Helen's inner life was indeed wonderful. Relieved from the pressure of an artificial system, to which she was vainly striving to bring up a revolting heart, she felt happy in a childlike confidence in God's fatherly forgiveness and love. She felt happy in the contemplation of Christ's glorious righteousness, and in the thought of belonging to Him.

The very face of nature, the beauty and gladness of which had hitherto seemed to her in strange contrast to the dark mysteries of theology, now wore to her a different aspect. The intense blue of the sea on the Thanet coast—the dazzling white cliffs—many other natural objects, which before she had looked on with an unheeding eye—now added to her new and strange feeling of cheerfulness. Her step was brisker, her eye brighter, the tone of her voice something quite different from what it had been. Her aunt continually congratulated herself on her improved looks, and the success of the scheme which she had originated.

It was now quite settled that the Randolphs were to live at Milnwood. Letters from thence had announced that Mr. and Mrs. Hargreave had arrived at the Vicarage, and that the Grange was getting in order for the reception of the new family. This was a source of deep thankfulness to Helen, for she hardly knew what she should have felt had the approaching separation from her friends been likely to be anything but a very short one. Independent of feelings of friendship, which had now become a very warm one, she hardly felt strong enough yet

to maintain the ground she had gained without Dr. Randolph's frequent support, especially when returning to old associations.

The Randolphs were to leave Broadstairs within a few days after the departure of Mrs. Stevens and her niece, but they intended remaining in London till their house was ready, which it was expected to be by the end of November.

There was one subject on which Helen was especially anxious to get Dr. Randolph's advice before returning to Milnwood. It was as to how she should act in reference to her religious friends, and especially towards Mr. Seymour; whether she should continue to attend at St. Mark's, or whether she should acknowledge that her views were changed.

Dr. Randolph's advice was generally, to make as few demonstrations as possible. 'You,' said he, 'have been led by a peculiar course of discipline to your present standing. You cannot convey to others the same experience; and to set one view of doctrine against another, where the intellect alone is to be the judge, only produces a war of words. Therefore talk as little about your views as possible to your religious friends, let them find them out for themselves. As to the question of where you should attend, as Milnwood is your parish church, it seems so natural you should go there, unless there were strong reasons to the contrary, that it will hardly excite much surprise. From what you have told me, I should suppose Mr. Seymour must be well aware you have

long been uneasy and unhappy, and he will probably be quite willing that you should try the effect of other ministrations. *He* has, of course, a right to know your change of views, if he should require it, but you need not press it on his attention.'

'I suppose,' said Helen, 'Mr. Hargreave's sentiments correspond with yours?'

'Yes, in the main; he was a pupil of mine. He is not an eloquent or striking preacher—he reads his sermons, which are simple, earnest, and practical. He is not a man that will be talked of as remarkable in any way, and probably he will not be marked as belonging to any particular school. But he is an excellent man, bent on carrying the kingdom of God into the home of every parishioner. Do you hear how your family like him?'

'My sisters like him very much, but they do not seem to expect that he will suit me. I am afraid they will be much surprised at my deserting Mr. Seymour.'

'Your intimacy with us, may perhaps serve to account for it.'

'Yes, there is that to be said. The change is much more sudden in appearance than in reality. For a long time I have inwardly sighed over the necessity of going to St. Mark's, but I had no alternative, for to return to the parish church in the existing state of things would have been too inconsistent. But I never breathed a word of dissatisfaction in my family.'

'You had no sympathy from them, I suppose?'

‘Oh, no; my religious opinions were highly unpopular at home,—partly, perhaps chiefly, through my own fault.’

‘Have you been in the habit of talking on these subjects in your family?’

‘At first I used to try to introduce them,—at the time I first heard Mr. Seymour, when I was much impressed with the duty of caring for the souls of relatives;—but I roused so much opposition, and every argument was so sure to end in a quarrel, that I was at last obliged to desist.’

‘Was it to your parents you talked, or merely to your brothers and sisters?’

‘To my sisters, principally. I never dared say much to mamma, though I used to think it was my duty; and papa, though I was less afraid of him, always put the subject aside with a joke. But mamma would generally take part in the conversation if we spoke before her, and be so very angry with me!’

‘On what grounds?’

‘Oh! I think it was generally about giving up the world and amusements.’

‘Did you then make that a prominent point in your representations?’

‘No, I do not think I did. I used, rather, to avoid that, because I thought that whilst they were in an unconverted state, it did not so much matter whether they went into the world or not. But they would generally press me on that point, whether I thought it right to go here, or go there, or do this or that. My sisters are young—they

are younger than I by several years, and at that time they were much set upon gaiety, and hated the thought of any restraint being put upon them.'

'What were the means you chiefly took to influence them?'

'I used to repeat to them the things Mr. Seymour said about human depravity, our lost state, the necessity of being born again, and so on. Now and then I got them to St. Mark's with me, but they were always disgusted, and we used to have such miserable discussions afterwards! I know I was often as much to blame as they were. I used to get warm and resent what they said. At last, I thought it better to avoid all talking about religion at home, and after I became so involved in perplexity myself, I was glad enough to do so, for if I could not satisfy myself, how could I hope to satisfy them? But if we had visitors—any old friends, who I thought were unconverted, I used to think it right to discharge my conscience by warning them of their danger; and I would endeavour to lend them books, or to put tracts in their way. Sometimes this was taken kindly, sometimes quite the reverse.'

'You say you did this to *discharge your conscience*; was this the prevailing motive?'

'I think it was.'

'You had no very sanguine expectation of doing them good?'

'Alas! no—at least, not latterly. I found my own efforts so unsuccessful, my prayers so unavailing, that I had little heart to recommend the same

course to others. But still, I was anxious to deliver my own soul. I dreaded that if I was unfaithful, their blood, in Scripture phrase, would be required at my hand.'

'Well, that, rightly understood, is a salutary fear, and yet I think, if St. Paul had had that uppermost in his mind, his success would not have been great. He was willing to impart unto his hearers, not the Gospel of God only, but also his own soul, because *they were dear* unto him.'

'Yes, I can see now,' said Helen, 'how unlikely it was that such cold, heartless efforts as mine, made only to save my own faithfulness, could do any good.'

'Why,' said Dr. Randolph, 'if we would win our way to the heart of another, we must convince him that we have *his* good in view, not some private end of our own. It does not much matter whether this end is the interest of a church or a party, the furtherance of our own salvation, or the avoidance of self-reproach now, or of condemnation for unfaithfulness hereafter. Still the person we want to benefit, if he finds out this, perceives that *his good* is only a means to something else, and he may naturally feel reluctance to be thus made use of. But if the person thinks that we really love him, and are thinking only of him, he may think us foolish, enthusiastic, or mistaken, but he cannot help being a little softened by disinterested kindness.

'Another point which is most necessary, if we would do good, is hopefulness. In your state of

mind, and with the views you held, I do not wonder at your feeling a kind of despair of success; it would have been wonderful if it had been otherwise. But a great many good people go about their work in a kind of hopeless way. They deliver a lecture without much regard to any preparation of mind in the hearer, get out as many unpalatable truths as they can, and then go away satisfied that, at least, they have done their duty. But divine truth enters much more by the heart than by the understanding. To influence others, we must study them; we must find out on what sides they are most accessible, and all, except the really hardened, are accessible somewhere; we must have patience, and wait for the right moment to give the right suggestion. All this requires great self-control, experience, and wisdom. But true love is the best teacher.'

'It is, indeed,' said Helen.

'The first thing we have to do,' said Dr. Randolph, 'is to arrest attention and so awaken desire. God sometimes does the former for us by sickness, death, or other striking events; and at those times a secret dissatisfaction with self often steals into the mind and prepares it to welcome something better. And there is no way in which this is so convincingly presented as by example. But example to be useful must result from *natural* conduct. No elaborate doing of things for the *sake of example*, no *talking in character*, can have the slightest good effect.'

'Oh, no!' said Helen; 'that I have always felt.

I never could bear those set religious phrases we sometimes hear; especially those which are introduced perhaps when the rest of the conversation has not been quite what one would expect.'

'I believe persons generally do most good,' resumed Dr. Randolph, 'when they are least thinking about it. But there are times, of course, when the heart is open on both sides, and when detailed explanations and urgent personal entreaties may be quite suitable. Now I should say, with your sisters, or with any other friends you may have, try first to gain their confidence by unaffected sympathy. How can we believe that another loves us, and is seeking our future good, if we plainly perceive they care nothing about what affects us now?'

'How, indeed!' said Helen. 'I see too plainly how much harm I must often have done, by the cold indifference which I have of late exhibited to everything that was going on in the family.'

'Well, perhaps they are conscious that they have not always merited or invited your sympathy, and may be the more ready to welcome it when they see you willing to give it. How did you get on with the poor?'

'Rather better, perhaps, than with others; because those whom I knew were generally persons whom I had helped a little in other ways. But with them I always felt great reluctance to set before them the doctrines I had been taught to consider essential. I did not see how I could expect them to receive them. I used to lend them books, and say very little.'

‘The uneducated,’ said Dr. Randolph, ‘are not so much apt to be shocked and revolted by the harsher features of the popular theology as we are; at least I imagine this is the case, judging by their preference for exaggerated statements of what are called the doctrines of grace, coarse material descriptions of hell, &c. &c. But then it is a question with me, whether the kind of conversion which follows the labours of such preachers is very genuine, or Christ-like; whether they are really much better in heart for their religion. If we consider what the Gospel *is*, that it is the ministry of *reconciliation* — what it aims at — to turn the very hearts of the people to God, we must see, I think, that no mere terror can ever effect this. It may bring a person to a stand, and compel them to look for help, but then it must be produced by means that do not repel from God, else help will not be sought from Him, or if it is, it will be sought in the spirit of a slave, who hates the master to whom he is obliged to crouch. Too many of the descriptions which are wrought up with a view to *impress*, as it is said, but really to terrify people, can only produce feelings akin to those which we think so dreadful in the heathens towards their gods.’

‘But are there not,’ said Helen, ‘some awful denunciations, even in our Saviour’s discourses?’

‘There are, but if you notice they are generally directed to those who were the bitter enemies of his message of mercy, who not only rejected it themselves, but opposed and hindered

its reception by others. His *general* invitation was, 'Come unto me ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Denunciations of wrath cannot be too plain when they are used to the right persons, and in the right place, and when wrath is shown to be not arbitrary infliction, but the natural deserved result of obstinate wilful depravity. But the best frame of mind in which to address people is, I think, one of hopefulness, not as those who are almost certain to be lost, which is the way, I believe, in which a great many good people look upon their fellow creatures, but as those whom God loves, and for whom Christ died, and whom He will save if they will but let him. It is also a great encouragement to reflect that there is deep down in every one's soul a remnant of good,—a susceptibility of divine impression, if we could but reach it. Of course I speak generally; there may be, there doubtless are, those who have stifled all their better feelings, till they are quite dead—'twice dead,' as the Scripture says, 'plucked up by the roots.'

'How awful!' said Helen.

'Awful, indeed! I have heard the question at times mooted, whether future punishment is, strictly speaking, endless. I pretend not to pronounce what resources there may be in God's futurity, but I see not how those who have gone on saying—'Evil, be thou my good,' till it has completely absorbed into itself every element of their nature,—I see not how such, if they exist at all, can be other than miserable. But the great mass

of people with whom we have to do are made up of good and evil, in varying qualities, and our business is to cherish and cultivate the good, and engraft upon it the higher principle which *it* alone can receive.'

'If one could only do that,' said Helen; 'if one could only reach the susceptible part of the soul.'

'It can only be by observation and that sympathy which much self-acquaintance gives. But it is always safe to encourage every thing good. Every act of self-denial, every true and honest feeling, is something gained; for if God is infinite goodness, if religion is perfected goodness, the least measure of right feeling shortens by something the distance to be traversed in returning to our Father's house.'

'But are not amiable and moral people sometimes the most difficult to win?'

'If they are it is for this reason, that their tempers are easy, their circumstances easy, their temptations next to nothing, and their goodness costs them very little; of that little they think a great deal, and are not disposed to aspire after anything more, whilst, where persons are brought to deny self, to resist strong temptations, they generally acquire an insight into their weakness by the very victory they gain, and this is sufficient to keep them from self-complacency. As Abbott well says, in his *Way to do Good*, every approach to what is right quickens the moral sensibilities and makes the next step easier.'

'But were not the Pharisees the great enemies of our Lord?'

‘They were, indeed, but then what constituted their ground of confidence was not so much moral rectitude, but a formal outward religion which was put in the stead of it. Those of them who were really sincere—really honest, did find their way to Christ, as Nicodemus and others. And so we find now that the greatest obstacle to real spirituality is a certain zeal for orthodoxy, when it is put in the place of charity. If you can but enlarge a person’s notions of duty, clear his sense of obligation, you will do more to bring him to a Saviour than if you prove to him by a hundred passages of Scripture that he is regarded as a sinner.’

‘I have often,’ said Helen, ‘felt such a difficulty in comprehending what is really meant in sermons by sin. It is seldom defined very clearly.’

‘Preachers,’ said Dr. Randolph, ‘would do well to analyse more closely common life. It is taken for granted that, as God is the Highest Being, sins against him (I mean what are popularly considered to be peculiarly such—every sin is really a sin against his authority) are the first which should be charged on the conscience. But St. John says, ‘If a man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how shall he love God, whom he hath not seen?’ implying that it is easier to do one than the other. And surely, then, it is best to try to convince persons of those sins which their conscience is most likely to recognise, rather than to begin at once with deeper and more spiritual sins, which they are not sufficiently enlightened honestly to acknowledge.’

'It is so easy,' said Helen, 'to call oneself a great sinner, because one thinks one ought to do so.'

'And yet the very persons who talk in that way often seem quite insensible to very obvious failures in their common life. I think one should not go very far wrong if one were to speak of *sin* and *selfishness* as synonymous terms; for if love is the fulfilling of the law, selfishness is the nullifying of it. Just take, then, St. Paul's description of charity, go through it clause by clause, and inquire how often we seek our own, are easily provoked, *do* think evil, &c. Who is there that would not plead guilty to this? And then so far as any one *does*, he may surely be brought to feel that if God is love, all selfishness is a contrariety to his nature. Depend upon it, it is better to make one step and carry conscience with you, than to stride on far in advance, and get only heartless assent and imitative profession.'

This was the last conversation Helen had with Dr. Randolph at Broadstairs. She and her aunt left two days afterwards. Even with the prospect of seeing her friends so soon again, Helen felt a little sad as she lost sight of the place where a load of many years accumulation had been lifted from her heart. It was a real refreshment to her when she reached Milnwood to see the workmen employed on the Grange, and various signs about the Vicarage, and the village altogether, which showed that a new era had commenced.

CHAPTER XII.

NATIONAL CHURCHES AND VOLUNTARY
SOCIETIES.

The great philosophical and Christian truth, which seems to me the very truth of truths, that Christian unity and the perfection of Christ's Church are independent of theological articles of opinion; consisting in a certain moral state and moral and religious affections, which have existed in good Christians of all ages and all communions along with an infinitely varying proportion of truth and error.—ARNOLD.

THE Mordaunts were staying for a few days at the Lodge when Helen returned. Much was said by all of her improved looks, and the sea air got all the credit of them.

The Hargreaves, of course, formed the staple of conversation. All seemed pleased with him in his ministerial character, but Emma Tyrrel said, with a sigh, she feared they would not be much of an acquisition to their society, as Mr. Hargreave seemed to think more of the poor than the rich, and Mrs. Hargreave was almost entirely taken up with her three little children.

'What sort of people are the Randolphys?' asked Mrs. Mordaunt. (Helen was not present).

'Oh, much the same, I suppose,' replied Emma; 'very religious; at least, I judge so by Helen's being so fond of them.'

'What does Helen know about them?'

‘Why, don’t you know, Julia, that they have been at Broadstairs, and Helen has been with them nearly every day?’

‘Aunt Stevens likes them very much indeed,’ said Harriet Tyrrel. ‘She says Mrs. Randolph is a most friendly, kind woman, and that they will be very pleasant neighbours; only Miss Randolph is a great invalid.’

‘What is that you are saying about the Randolphs?’ said Mr. Mordaunt, throwing down the paper and coming from the further end of the room. ‘When do they come? I should like to be introduced to Dr. Randolph. He, I hear, is a man worth knowing.’

‘Is he not a Low Church man; something of Mr. Seymour’s school?’ asked Mrs. Mordaunt.

‘Oh, no, nothing of the kind. He is rather one of those men who strike out a path for themselves, and lead rather than follow.’

‘Indeed! Then how came Helen to admire him?’ asked Mrs. Mordaunt.

‘That I cannot tell, except that I suppose she is wise enough to know talent and excellence when she sees them,’ replied her husband.

‘Not at all, unless they are cast in a particular mould. You know when she was with us, how she used to condemn every one, unless they belonged to her party.’

‘Well, my dear, people sometimes live and learn, and that may be her case.’

‘I hope it may,’ said Mrs. Mordaunt, in a tone that sounded like anything but hope.

It was a considerable relief to Helen to find that Mr. Seymour was absent from Hanbury, and would not return for a few weeks. This enabled her to go with the rest of her family quietly and without remark to the parish church.

Mr. Hargreave's manner in the pulpit was grave and quiet, and his sermon answered to the description Dr. Randolph had given. It was short, simple, and practical, but *not commonplace*. The text was from St. John, 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.' His main object appeared to be to exhibit sin in the discrepancy between knowledge and obedience; and this he traced with precision and fidelity through various details of human action.

'An excellent sermon,' said Mr. Mordaunt, as they walked home. 'That is what I call useful preaching.'

'Rather personal, I thought, in some parts,' said Mrs. Mordaunt. 'How did you like it, Helen? Not much, I suppose? Not enough of the Gospel for you.'

'It was at least an introduction to the Gospel,' replied Helen.

'But you do not consider him as holding the same sentiments as Mr. Seymour, do you?'

'I have not heard enough of him to judge,' said Helen.

She went again in the afternoon. The rest took advantage of the fine autumn weather to walk or drive.

Mr. Hargreave having in the morning shown

how much our practice falls below our knowledge, endeavoured to show how much our knowledge falls below realities, and this he brought out of the passage in 1 Samuel, ch. 8, 'They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me,' &c. Helen was delighted with the clear and convincing way in which he showed how by careless, wilful ignorance we narrow the sphere of our acknowledged duty, but not of our responsibility. He said but a few words at the close, reminding those who might be self-condemned, that there was help and forgiveness to be had, and the way open to return. Helen clearly saw that his aim was, on Dr. Randolph's principle, to proceed step by step, and that he did not expect to awaken a sense of want by the mere enunciation of truths which are designed to relieve it. She said nothing about the sermon; for she was anxious to avoid discussion.

'Well, I really think,' said Mr. Mordaunt to his wife, 'that this acquaintance with the Randolphs has done your sister some good already. She was quite pleasant to-day at dinner, and able to talk about common things without bringing in religion.'

'It may be so,' said Mrs. Mordaunt; 'but I confess I have no great faith in the change. Helen is fond of novelty; the last new person is always the best, and I daresay she was a little gratified by the Randolphs taking notice of her. At a stupid place like Broadstairs, no doubt they were glad of any one. When they come here the case will be

different ; they are sure to be called upon by every one. Helen will no longer find herself of so much consequence ; she will either go back to her old set, or else take up with some other new friend.'

'Well, we shall see,' said Mr. Mordaunt. 'For my part, I should be very glad to see her get a little more like other people. She is a good creature, after all, and I always thought it a pity she was so spoiled.'

At the Vicarage, Helen was welcomed very cordially. Mrs. Hargreave she found inferior to her sister in intellectual endowments, but possessing much of the cheerful kindliness of her mother, and like her fully imbued with reverence and admiration for the superiority of others. Mr. Hargreave was kind, but reserved and rather taciturn. Helen's younger sister, and indeed her mother, were much surprised at her getting in with the Hargreaves, and hardly gave her credit for sincerity when she expressed satisfaction with his sermons.

'What *are* Mr. Hargreave's views?' asked Mrs. Pembroke of Helen, the first time they were together after her return. 'Do you consider that he preaches the whole truth?'

'I have not heard him go very deeply into doctrines as yet,' replied Helen, 'but I scarcely think his views would quite satisfy you.'

'No, so I suppose. His sermons are very meagre, I understand ; not much calculated to do any good in that dark parish.'

‘I think them much calculated to instruct,’ said Helen.

‘Yes, but not to arouse and awaken, which is what they want. And I would have you be on your guard. I do not know what Mr. Hargreave’s sentiments may be, but I have been told on good authority that Dr. Randolph’s are not quite sound. However, I shall call on the Randolphs as soon as they come, for Mrs. Randolph is a connexion of mine, though we have not seen much of each other of late years.’

The Randolphs arrived about the end of November. As Mrs. Mordaunt had predicted, they were called upon by nearly all the neighbourhood; but, contrary to her predictions, they did not manifest less regard for Helen than at Broadstairs. She was with them almost daily; she read with Agnes, and brought her difficulties to Dr. Randolph as before. All the Tyrrels were pleased with the new family, who showed every disposition to be on terms of easy intercourse. Mrs. Randolph was annoyed at the cold, unmotherly way in which Mrs. Tyrrel spoke of Helen, and Agnes was often wearied with the frivolity of her two sisters, and their want of any desire for self-improvement; but it was ever their principle to make the best of those with whom they came in contact, and to watch in hope of making that best positively good. For Helen’s sake they would have done this now, if for no other reason, for they had begun to love her very dearly.

Dr. Randolph entered warmly into parish matters with Mr. Hargreave. He had fixed his residence at Milnwood, in expectation of assisting his son-in-law, at least with advice, during his own present suspension from active and arduous duties.

The difficulties of the parish were—its size, consisting of out-lying hamlets at the distance of three, four, and five miles from the church, the want of schools, and the number of dissenters.

Helen, who was a good walker, and had always, with whatever reluctance, compelled herself to visit amongst the poor and distribute tracts, was now very useful to Mr. Hargreave in accompanying him to the remoter parts of his parish, and their acquaintance greatly improved by this means.

‘I really think, Miss Tyrrel,’ said he to her one evening, when she had been dining at the Vicarage with the Randolphs, ‘I really think that I might divide the poor in my parish into two classes, ‘un-godly’ and ‘dissenters.’

‘It is very much the case,’ said Helen. ‘Almost all the poor, if they are at all in earnest about religion, become members of some dissenting church, and no wonder, if one considers what was the state of things under poor Mr. Nelson. Only one service, that in the morning—a sermon which they could not hear, and which, if they had heard, could not interest them.’

‘Yes, there was a local cause in this parish,’ replied Mr. Hargreave, ‘but it is rather curious that almost everywhere the religious poor are fonder of

the meeting than the church. I am told that at Hanbury a great number, even of Mr. Seymour's poorer parishioners, attend dissenting chapels, either occasionally or altogether. And yet, I suppose, there are none of the dissenting ministers who as preachers are equal to him.'

'It is not the preaching, *merely*,' said Dr. Randolph, 'though that has, of course, a great deal to do with it. The poor are fond of sermons; they are their best means of instruction, and they will, if they can, hear what interests them. But it is not sermons only, nor even the better accommodation they get, which draws them to meeting, it is the satisfaction of the social principle in religion. In these small societies they have real fellowship—mutual sympathy, something like the Communion of Saints. They cannot get that by merely coming to church, no, nor even by the visits of the most zealous and laborious clergyman. They want association amongst themselves closer than what the territorial division of a parish can afford.'

'But I think, sir,' said Mr. Hargreave, 'if I understand your sentiments rightly, you approve of the parochial order.'

'I highly approve of it, and consider it the only means for the general instruction of our people. I should like to see it extended, and made yet more efficient. But I doubt whether, in its most perfect form, it could meet every religious want. I doubt if it could render needless small voluntary associations of the people, and we may then be patient with those which exist.'

‘But surely,’ said Mr. Hargreave, ‘schism is an evil. I readily admit that such societies as the Methodist originally were, supplementary to the Church, not antagonistic to it, might have no more weakened it than the Benedictines or Franciscans weakened the Church of Rome. But now, when we have hostile sects seeking to undermine and really destroy the Church, the case is quite different.’

‘Yes, we have got into an anomalous and very unhealthy state,’ said Dr. Randolph; ‘and I think in great part through confounding the various forms in which are expressed the great idea of the Church, and transferring to one form what is only true of another. The idea of the Church itself is subordinate to the idea of the kingdom of God; it is that amount of territory which has been recovered and brought under the laws of this kingdom.’

‘Will you, papa,’ said Agnes, ‘explain for my benefit and Helen’s, what you mean by the Church?’

‘Most willingly.’

‘Those who throughout all ages, and amidst all accidental diversities have been animated by the same spirit, have aimed at one object, been devoted to one God, stood before Him in the worthiness of one Saviour, owning one Lord, these constitute the Holy Catholic Church. They are the true spiritual commonwealth, the whole family in heaven and earth, the body of Christ. But as in the body of Christ there are members in particular, so there may be aggregates of members formed into parti-

cular communities, as in the churches of Apostolic times, and these may have laws and internal regulations, binding on themselves, but which should not be such as to prevent free communion with the whole body, otherwise they become schismatical and sectarian. Next, when one of these aggregates of believers becomes so numerous as to pervade and interpenetrate a whole nation, and to influence its laws and government, the nation then becomes a visible church of Christ, that is, a society governing itself according to Christ's laws, a province of His earthly kingdom. I see not why such a nation may not found an institution for the instruction and training of the people, and for the extension and maintenance of Christian worship amongst them. This, to me, seems the simplest idea of a National Establishment; that it is an institute for the religious training of a people, and for this purpose it must have laws and ministers of its own. Its ministers then sustain a double relation. On the one hand they are or may be ministers of the Church Catholic by a relation which no human laws can effect; 'they are put in trust with the Gospel'—so far as they are ministers of the National Establishment, they are put in trust with the Gospel for a particular district, and under certain regulations.

But now, as a great endowed public school does not necessitate the suppression of all private tuition within its reach, neither, I think, need a great national institute for the religious training of the nation require the extinction of all voluntary

associations for religious improvement. And as there are some ends better answered by private tuition than by public, some boys who will do better with a few associates under one master than in the freer and wider atmosphere of a great school, so, I think, there are some characters and some classes which do better, gathered under the close discipline of a small congregational church, than when confounded in the general parochial administration.'

'You think it is chiefly the poor who require this?' said Mr. Hargreave.

'Chiefly, but not entirely. The higher and more educated classes have more opportunities of falling back upon the great body of Christians; can better keep up communion with them by books, correspondence, locomotion, &c., so as to get sympathy even when they do not have it at their own doors, but even this class, you see, do manage in large places to collect together in congregations round some favourite minister.'

'Is there no means, do you think,' said Mr. Hargreave, 'no machinery in the Church of England by which we could supply this want amongst our people?'

'Certainly,' said Dr. Randolph. 'The parish minister may and often does sustain a double character—that of Public Instructor, and that of chosen Pastor. To the one function he is appointed by the nation, with the other he is invested by the willing adhesion of attached disciples. Something might be done, I suppose, and something is often attempted by means of meetings of communicants, &c.; but I

hardly think *much* without injuring the efficiency of the general parochial character; but having never had to do with the working of a parish, I am not a fair judge.'

'It seems hard to have to tolerate so great an evil as dissent, and actually to lose our people out of our fold.'

'If there were a true spirit of brotherly kindness abroad, and a candid, liberal adjustment of points of difference, I cannot see why dissenting bodies should not bear to the National Church the same relation as the Monastic Orders did to the Church of Rome: associations of people wishing to live by their own rule, and yet recognising, and as occasion serves, helping forward the work of the National Society. As regards the Church Catholic, I do not see why voluntary associations of the kind I have in view should be regarded with suspicion, for to say the very least their pastors are Christian laymen; and there is nothing contrary to primitive usage in a 'Church in a house;' but the question is not so much whether these societies are schismatical as regards the Universal Church, but whether they are inconsistent with a National Church. I do not believe they are schismatical as regards the Universal Church, because I consider that admits of every variety of organization, and is bound by no positive institutions, except Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and as to whether they are inconsistent with the National Church depends much on the spirit by which they are actuated.'

'I believe,' said Mr. Hargreave, 'that the dissenting poor do not care much about church questions, and only estimate the 'parson' according as he does or does not 'preach the gospel.' But the rank above them in dissenting congregations are generally bitterly hostile to the Church Establishment.'

'Their hostility I fancy,' said Dr. Randolph, 'would be greatly lessened if they had fuller, more tangible proof, of the value of the Church as a public instructor. And I must say that if they have not, it is in great part owing to another cause, which might be remedied by proper authority; our services are too long, and not suited to the uneducated and undisciplined. Our ecclesiastical laws are far too unbending to meet the existing state of things. And this is a grave fault, as it prevents the Church from accomplishing her primary office of public instructor. We want the power of holding religious meetings when and where we will, and of adapting our prayers, our choice of Scripture, our addresses, to the classes with whom we have to deal. We must abate something of our stiffness and stereotyped character, or the Establishment will ere long be the Church of the rich and educated only.'

'Yes, I feel what you say to be true,' said Mr. Hargreave. 'I shall do what I can; have lectures in the distant hamlets, and so on.'

'There was a great deal said at one time,' said Helen, 'about building a church at Longfield. Mr.

Nelson said it was time when a dissenting chapel was built there.'

'I should have rather thought,' said Dr. Randolph, 'it was time when there was no place of worship at all.'

'But a church,' said Mr. Hargreave, 'would involve the very difficulty you were speaking of, the necessity of having a full liturgical service, and would not be likely to rival the meeting in the affections of the poor.'

'Just so. When shall we lay aside our hypocrisies and jealousies, have a single aim, and go straightforward and wisely to it?'

The conversation was here broken off by the entrance of tea.

'Have you seen Mr. Seymour yet, Mr. Hargreave?' said Helen, after awhile. 'I hear he has returned.'

'So I find. No, we have been unfortunate. He called on me, and I on him, but we missed each other both times. And, by-the-by, have you heard that he is likely to leave Hanbury.'

'No, indeed, I have not heard anything of that kind,' said Helen.

'I am told he has been offered a large chapel somewhere near London. I forget the name of the chapel, but I think Mr. Malpas was the last incumbent.'

'I know the chapel very well,' said Helen. 'I went to hear Mr. Malpas there once.'

'He was rather a celebrated preacher, was he not?'

'Yes—he was very popular at that time; but I confess I was quite disappointed in him. But is

it likely Mr. Seymour will accept this appointment?’

‘The person that told me of it, thought it very likely,’ replied Mr. Hargreave. ‘His friends generally, consider him well calculated to draw a congregation in that locality, and it is thought that he would rather like the post. I confess it is not one that I should covet.’

‘Oh dear, no, I should hope not,’ exclaimed Mrs. Hargreave. ‘I have not much opinion of what are called *popular* preachers.’

‘I do not know what you may include under that term,’ said her father, ‘but I do not think it should be applied as a stigma. The gift of utterance is a great and valuable gift, and not to be despised because it is sometimes overvalued.’

‘But, do you not think,’ said Mrs. Hargreave, ‘popularity must be gained by humouring the prejudices and tastes of the hearers?’

‘I very much doubt,’ said Dr. Randolph, ‘whether such a plan would succeed long, though of course a man might easily make himself unpopular by carelessly and roughly opposing them. Most persons soon tire of a teacher who never rises above their own level. Let every one decide for himself. Do you—did you ever—admire any thing which only just came up to your own standard?’

‘No; but when one sees persons who are evidently worldly, still enthusiastic in their admiration of some favourite preacher, one is very apt to imagine that he does not much trouble their repose.’

‘That by no means follows,’ said Dr. Randolph. ‘Persons often sincerely admire and approve that which they still cannot resolve to embrace as their own. As a general rule, I believe those who are the truest, who most faithfully reproduce the facts of Scripture, of human life and human feeling, will draw most hearts to them; and that is what I suppose is meant by popularity; and before we depreciate the gifts of utterance, and the power to touch what is deepest in the soul, we should remember that in this sense, and through the greater part of his ministry, our Lord was pre-eminently popular; and that St. Paul bore the Galatians witness that at one time they would have plucked out their own eyes and given to him.’

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRIALS OF AN INVALID.

I have been to a land—a Border Land—
Where there was but a strange dim light,
Where shadows and dreams in a spectral band,
Seemed real to the aching sight.
I scarce bethought me how there I came,
Or if thence I should pass again;
Its morning and night were marked by the flight
Or coming of woe and pain.

THE event which Mr. Hargreave spoke of as probable took place. Mr. Seymour left Hanbury, and for some time the congregation at St. Mark's was unsettled. The clergyman who was at length appointed was of similar sentiments to Mr. Seymour, but inferior to him in talents and energy.

Helen saw her former friend and pastor once or twice before his departure, but he appeared to avoid any particular mention of her views or feelings. But to Mrs. Pembroke, he said that he was disappointed in Miss Tyrrel, and that he had great fears whether she might not eventually make shipwreck of her faith.

Mrs. Pembroke had taken an early opportunity of renewing her acquaintance with Mrs. Randolph, and a considerable degree of intimacy sprang up between the two households.

Mrs. Pembroke's family consisted of two daughters, and a son who was married and lived at Pembroke Hall, the family seat. Of her daughters, the eldest, Augusta, was at this time on the point of marriage. The youngest, Sophia, about nineteen, ever rather a delicate girl, was now to all appearance in a declining state of health. Mrs. Pembroke, strong and active herself, had always insisted on her children taking a large amount of exercise; more than one governess had been compelled to leave from inability to keep up with the walks required. As Mrs. Pembroke had also strong impressions of the importance of young people being early made useful, these walks were generally connected with employments tasking considerably the mind and spirits. Wide districts were assigned to the girls for tract distribution, &c., and long distances had often to be traversed in all sorts of weather. The elder Miss Pembroke fortunately escaped injury under this hardening process, but Sophia grew fast, and to any one less bent on carrying out her own ideas, it would have been evident that the poor girl was working beyond her strength. Any hints from friends or medical men to this effect, were, however, so ill received, that they soon ceased to be given, and the mischief went on till even Mrs. Pembroke herself became aware that Sophia was not well. Various remedies had been tried, but they were either in themselves wide of the mark, or were neutralized by some inconsistent treatment; and the invalid growing worse, she was taken at last to an eminent London

physician, who pronounced the case serious, and peremptorily enjoined quiet, a reclining posture, and total abstinence from any fatigue of mind or body. Mrs. Pembroke, alarmed, acquiesced at first in his plan of treatment, but when a few weeks had passed, and her fears had somewhat subsided, she began to suggest slight modifications of the prescribed rules.

‘It was all very well at first,’ said she to Mrs. Randolph one day when they were discussing the case, ‘and physicians, of course, *must* speak strongly; but I certainly shall use my own judgment, and not allow Sophia to continue in such complete inaction.’

‘Is she tired of it herself?’ inquired Mrs. Randolph.

‘No! there is the evil. From the first she has been very much inclined to give way, instead of doing her utmost to struggle against poorly feelings; and now she really seems to care for no earthly thing but lying quiet.’

‘Do not you think that that is in itself an indication that quiet is the one thing which her system requires?’

‘*Certainly not!* my dear Mrs. Randolph. I cannot admit that what we should like, is any indication of what we ought to have. Rather the contrary;—I think that dislike to exertion, fancifulness about noise, &c., which she exhibits, are temptations arising from our depraved nature, and requiring to be mortified and resisted, not encouraged.’

Mrs. Randolph thought it best, under the circumstances, not to dispute these propositions; she therefore simply observed, that as it was a point of great delicacy to determine how far the symptoms of physical debility are influenced by moral causes, it is wisest and safest to rely on intelligent medical opinion.

‘Oh! as to that,’ rejoined Mrs. Pembroke, ‘I am not so sure that Dr. Smith was right about the case. I had a letter the other day from an intimate friend of mine, who had a daughter by all accounts very much in the same state as Sophia, and she tells me that a very clever man who saw her told them that every thing depended upon her being *roused*. His advice was followed, and she got well.’

‘The cases,’ replied Mrs. Randolph, ‘though apparently similar, might, in reality, have been very different, or they might have been in different stages. There is a time, doubtless, though I should be sorry to take upon me to determine when that time has commenced, when the system has actually recovered its energies, and yet, from long habit, the patient is unconscious of the fact.’

‘Yes, and I am very much mistaken if that is not the case with Sophy. I am convinced that she could do much more than she does, if she were to rouse herself.’

‘Perhaps she might, under some excessive stimulus; but the question is, would she be the better for it in the end? Would not a mischievous reaction follow? We all know that by running, we

can reach a given point quicker than by walking; but as afterwards we must take time to recover our breath, the time really gained on the whole, if we have a long distance to go, is very trifling.'

'Oh! but I am sure Sophy is much stronger than she thinks, or than any one thinks her. And one reason why I have said all this to you, my dear Mrs. Randolph, is this. Sophy has taken a great fancy to your Agnes, and is, I know, looking forward to seeing her now and then. Now Miss Randolph, who has been so long an invalid herself, and who is so admirably cheerful and patient, will be just the person to do Sophy good, and I hope she will take opportunities of suggesting to her that it is really a duty not to give way to illness, but to exert herself as much as possible, lest she should fall into confirmed valetudinarian habits, which would render her life a burden to herself and others. She will take any remark of that kind from Miss Randolph so much better than from her sister or from me; and really I am so much occupied just now about Augusta's marriage, that I cannot devote as much time to Sophia as I might wish. On that account, too, I am obliged to allow her to be a great deal in her own room, which I am persuaded is very bad for her, though I fancy she prefers it. When this bustle is over, I shall insist upon her being more in the family.'

Mrs. Randolph promised that Agnes should do all in her power to be of service to Miss Pembroke, and Mrs. Pembroke took her leave.

'I am afraid,' said Agnes, afterwards, when

she and her mamma were talking over the task imposed upon her, 'that Mrs. Pembroke has hit upon a bad auxiliary to her rousing plan. I often think I owe the comparative health and ease which I now enjoy to your judicious kindness in never allowing me to go beyond my strength in anything, and my cheerfulness is partly owing to the ceaseless efforts you and dear papa made, to give me all needful variety without tempting me to undue exertion.'

'I did but act under orders, my dear,' said Mrs. Randolph; 'there was nothing about which Dr. Wilson was more urgent than in recommending me to follow, instead of attempting to force, nature.'

'And then how foolish it seems to me, mamma, to talk to persons about *rousing themselves*. It seems to me that if one is quite sure on medical grounds, not on one's own fancies, that the time is come when a person might take some exercise, employ the hands or head more, or whatever it is, with safety and advantage, and yet they feel averse to it, the way is not to talk to them about rousing, but to wile them on by some inducement to do it unconsciously. But here comes Helen; let us ask her what she knows of this case of poor Sophy Pembroke.'

'I most truly pity that poor girl,' said Helen, when Mrs. Pembroke's remarks had been repeated to her. 'I believe she has been for years struggling with feelings which she has kept to herself. I know, for she told me, that Dr. Smith said it was a case of entire prostration of the nervous

system, and that it would take a long time for this to recover itself. She has seemed a little more comfortable since they came from town, because she has been allowed to be quiet, and keep up stairs.'

'What sort of a person was she before her illness?'

'A gentle, amiable, thoughtful girl, and as it appeared to me truly in earnest about religion. She never missed a religious service or meeting if she could help it; and her chief, if not her only reading, was of a serious character. She greatly felt Mr. Seymour's leaving, I think. I have often wondered whether she is happy in her mind, but Mrs. Pembroke has seemed to avoid leaving us together of late. I am very glad she has proposed your visiting her.'

Agnes was not long in calling on Miss Pembroke. Her father had, on their coming to Miluwood, provided for his daughter a wheeled chair, in which she could move about with less trouble than in a carriage, and with the assistance of a servant she easily reached the invalid's room. The countenance of Sophia Pembroke flushed with pleasure when she saw her. They had met once before for a short time, when Agnes had gone with her mother, and though little had been spoken, Sophy had read sympathy in the visitor's looks. It was not long before she was drawn out to speak freely of herself. Agnes had observed that she was not lying in a very comfortable posture, and had proposed a fresh adjustment of the pillows.

‘I have been walking about the room,’ she said. ‘Mamma wishes me to do so a little every day, but I became so giddy and faint that I lay down, I believe, anyhow.’

‘Why did you not ring for some one to put you comfortable?’ said Agnes.

‘Oh, I do not want to give more trouble than I can help. I wish I were not obliged to be so idle and so helpless. It would be better, I know, if I were down stairs with the rest. But you have no idea, Miss Randolph, what I suffer if there is much talking or movement in the room. My head is so bad at times.’

Agnes looked at the flush which overspread the thin, wasted cheeks, and at the nervous motion of the hands as she thus spoke, and had a *very good idea* of what her sufferings must be.

‘You see,’ she continued, ‘just now there is a good deal going on about Augusta’s wedding, which all makes it worse for me.’

‘You have some one with you, generally, I suppose?’ said Agnes.

Jemima, our maid, sits with me most of the day. She is busy working at Augusta’s dresses now, and to-day she has a dressmaker helping her. They were both here a little while ago, but I could not bear their talking and planning their work, and so I begged them to take their things into Augusta’s room, as my sister is out with mamma.’

‘I can easily imagine,’ said Agnes, ‘that any talking or discussing is at times more than you can bear. I hope you will tell me if I tire you.’

'Oh no, my dear Miss Randolph, I like to have you here, of all things; but the talking about dresses, and carriages, and worldly things, is what is so painful to me. It seems so unsuitable to one in my situation.'

'Do you know,' said Agnes, 'that when my sister, Caroline Hargreave, was married, I used to like to have them come and tell me all the little arrangements. They were very kind, and took care not to tire me too much.'

'Were you very ill?'

'Not worse than I had been for some time past; but not near so well as I am now.'

'Not so ill as to think you should die?' asked Sophy.

'No; but if I had been, I think I should still have wished to know all that my dear sister was likely to have and to do when I should be gone.'

'Ah! but then you are so good, Miss Randolph. You know that you are safe. But I—I am so different.'

'How, different, my dear?' asked Agnes, soothingly.

'Do you know,' she answered, without heeding the question, 'I feel that I shall not get well,—that I may not live long. Mamma, I know, thinks differently. But I have that within which convinces me I am right; and, Miss Randolph, I feel that I have a great work to do—I am not prepared for death—I am not safe—and how can I bear to turn my thoughts to the vanities of earth?'

She turned her large eyes beseechingly on

Agnes, who regarded her with a look of thoughtful compassion.

‘What do you consider necessary to insure our safety, dear?’

‘Oh, to have an interest in Christ, to be reconciled to God by the blood of His Son. I had a letter from Mr. Seymour only a few days ago, and he put these questions to me: ‘Do you feel that you have an interest in Christ?—that you are reconciled to God through the death of His Son?’ I have thought and prayed again and again, but I have never been able to get a comfortable assurance that I do belong to Christ, that I am a child of God.’

‘Nor could I, I am sure,’ said Agnes, ‘ever feel such a persuasion, if I thought the being interested in Christ depended on anything in ourselves. That would be dreadful.’

‘I do not mean, of course,’ said Sophia, ‘that it depends on ourselves really; it is the work of the Spirit, of course.’

‘But I should be very sorry to think it depended on any feeling, or state of mind—anything, in short, which distinguishes one from another. I never could be sure at all times that I had this qualification, whatever it might be. It is my comfort to think that an interest in Christ depends upon God’s unspeakable gift of Him to the whole human race, that every human being has an interest in Christ, if he will but claim it; that whosoever will may take of the water of life freely.’

‘It does seem very easy and simple, certainly,

when one reads that verse ; but then there are so many ways of deceiving oneself—it is so difficult to know if one is in earnest—if one has a true faith. There must be, you know, difficulties, or else we should not be told to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and warned that many will seek to enter in, and not be able. And again : ‘ Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.’ Is it reasonable to fear lest I may not be one of those few ?

‘ But my dear Miss Pembroke—’

‘ Do call me ‘ Sophy,’ please. I am not Miss Pembroke ; and it sounds so formal.’

‘ Well, then, dear Sophy,’ said Agnes, smiling, ‘ if you will give me that privilege—those words never could be meant to drive away really earnest, humble persons. If we only consider how many there were who surrounded our Lord, who had totally mistaken notions about His kingdom, and who would have cared very little about it, if they had understood what it was, we shall see why He said, ‘ Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.’ Even now these cautions are needful, because there are a great many persons whose notion of salvation is, that it is a means of being safe at last ; saved, in fact, from some sort of physical suffering, and made happy in some way which they do not very well understand. Now many will seek to enter in and not be able, because they have really been seeking all the while for the wrong thing,

and not at all caring for the right, which is the transformation of their souls into Christ's image through His daily teaching. But I am afraid you will be exhausted. Do let me get you something, and then I think I had better leave you.'

'Oh, no! pray do not leave me. I may not have such a good opportunity of talking with you again for some time. If you could just get me that bottle, it is time for me to take my medicine.'

Agnes administered it to her, and after a few minutes' rest, said,

'Do you never read anything but religious books, dear? I see all these are of that character.'

'Oh! no; how dare I waste the precious time which remains to make my calling and election sure?'

'Dear papa would never let me confine my reading to works of a directly religious character,' said Agnes. 'He said that when the mind, especially in illness, is too much occupied with one set of thoughts, the judgment becomes distorted and the feelings diseased. I think one can maintain communion with one's Saviour without being always occupied in reading about Him.'

'Sometimes,' said Sophy, 'I do fancy that books worry and confuse me, and fill my mind with painful images. I could not sleep a few nights ago for thinking of something dreadful I read of the sufferings of Halyburton, in the account of his death-bed.'

'I am sure, my love, you ought not to read such things.'

'But how do I know what I may have to suffer

myself, even here, and then hereafter, if I miss of salvation?’

‘Dearest Sophy, if you could but feel what is expressed in those sweet lines,—

Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me,
And the changes that will surely come
I do not fear to see.

I wish I could fix in your mind that God is our Father—‘the Father of all mankind, not only of a few selected ones,—that He is seeking to reclaim His children to Himself—that to this end He has given to His Blessed Son, our Elder Brother, all power in heaven and earth to make us what we ought to be—like His own blessed and glorious and perfect self.’* You seem somehow to have reversed this order, and instead of feeling that it was the will of our Father that His Son should save us, and that it is the will of the Son, our Elder Brother, to bring us back to His Father; you seem to think that a great deal is necessary on our part to induce the Saviour to receive us, and that a great deal had to be done on His part to induce His Father to have pity on us. Is not this something your view?’

‘Perhaps it is. I have always been taught it is only a few—a little flock comparatively, who belong to Christ, and have any right to expect a share in His salvation; and there are a great many tests in religious books by which we must try ourselves so

* KINGSLEY's *Sermon on Easter Day*.

as to ascertain whether we belong to that happy number—whether we are indeed God's children.'

'I see,' said Agnes, 'that where you and I differ is in this,—that you think there are none who are the children of God except those who are really reaping the full benefit of their relationship. But the Prodigal Son was a son still, even whilst he was straying, lost and dead to all a child's privileges.'

'I wish I could think that was true,' said Sophy, 'for I always feel a great strangeness and awe of going to God. I think I should feel this even if I could make up my mind that my soul was safe. It seems so awful to think of His justice, and of the great numbers of people who are lost.'

'I am sure I should feel the same kind of terror if I thought as you do,' said Agnes; 'but I believe that God is not willing that any should perish, and I cannot think that any will, except those who finally refuse to let Him save them.'

'Oh! but Miss Randolph, that cannot be; think of the heathen, and the numbers who, even in our own country, have never had any opportunity of hearing about Christ.'

'I can leave them all in His hands who is the Saviour of all men. We have no right to pronounce on their state as if we knew everything about it. If we thoroughly believe that He loves us, and will make us perfectly holy and happy—if we will but give ourselves up to Him, we shall have less difficulty in believing that He will do all for the rest of the world that we can expect from Infi-

nite love. There are two things, certainly, which we know He will not do, because He cannot. He will not make men happy whilst they are enemies to Him and to one another, and He will not make them holy and loving by destroying their will, for then there would be no holiness in the case,—they would be no longer voluntary creatures. But these are deep subjects, not fit for an invalid.'

'Oh, I think about them constantly, therefore I may as well talk about them, and get my mind satisfied. Who knows how near I may be to the solution of these questions?'

'And you will find the reality infinitely more blessed than anything we can imagine. But I must go now, dear Sophy. Do, there's a dear girl, try to think of God as a Father, such a Father as that in the Parable of the Prodigal—no—better than that, for He sent His Son to seek the wanderer and bring him back. You cannot think what a comfort I have found it when I have been so weak I hardly knew when I was sinking to sleep whether I should wake in this world—what a comfort, I say, it has been to me to feel that my Father would take care of me. He knows what is wanting in us, and He will supply it. But I hear footsteps—one kiss.'

This had just been given when Mrs. Pembroke and her eldest daughter entered.

'I thought I should find you here, Miss Randolph, for I saw your chair at the door. Well, how do you find Sophy? But you can hardly judge, seeing her almost for the first time.'

'I declare,' said Miss Pembroke, a tall and fashionably dressed young woman, who had thrown herself into a lounging chair as soon as she had got fairly into the room, 'I think Sophy looks decidedly better; a little fresh society has done her good. I often think she shuts herself up too much alone.'

'I am afraid,' said Agnes, 'she is a little overtired and feverish now' (the cheeks of the poor invalid girl had flushed crimson on the entrance of the others, and the attitude of quiet repose was exchanged for a nervous restlessness);—'I am afraid I have made a longer visit than my prudent mamma would have sanctioned.'

'Oh, no,' said Sophy, 'I have been so glad to have you. Thank you very much for staying.'

'Well, at any rate I *must* go now,' said Agnes; and squeezing her hand, she took the arm which Mrs. Pembroke offered to lead her out of the room.

'Well, what do you think of her?' said Mrs. Pembroke, as soon as they were outside.

'She seems very weak.'

'Oh, yes, she is weak, certainly, and so would any one kept up in a sick room and taking so little food. I often press upon her the necessity of taking more nourishment; and I wish I had asked you to hint that to her as a duty.'

'She has not much appetite, I suppose?'

'No; nor can she have, until she takes more exercise.'

'And for that she does not appear to have strength.'

'Oh! but there is a good deal nervous in all that.'

She *fancies* she has no strength. But it is a proof to me, by the way in which she has appeared to enjoy your visit, how much her complaint is on the nerves. If it had been any ordinary visitor, any one she did not care about, she would have seemed ready to die with exhaustion.'

'I hope she will rest now,' said Agnes, anxiously. 'I am afraid she is exhausted,—I am afraid I staid too long. If you admit me again, I will be more firm about leaving. Do persuade her to rest now.'

'Oh, yes, we will take care of her,' said Mrs. Pembroke, smiling at Agnes' urgency. 'Augusta is with her, and she will make her be quiet.'

Augusta, however, stayed with her sister only to talk about what she had been doing in her shopping, to exhibit her different purchases, and discuss patterns and fashions till the dressing-bell called her away, and left the nervous, harassed invalid to comparative quiet.

When Mrs Pembroke found her daughter feverish and restless in the evening, she added to her distress by blaming Miss Randolph for staying too long, and Sophy for talking too much.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SEQUEL.

Come away, for life and thought
Here no longer dwell,
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible;
Would they could have stayed with us!

TENNYSON.

AGNES sent to Hanbury Place the next morning to inquire after Sophia. The answer was, that she had had a bad night, and was very poorly. The bulletin of the next two days was equally unfavourable; and as Agnes herself was not very well, and not equal to going out, on the uncertainty of seeing the object of her visit, Mrs. Randolph determined to go herself. She was admitted to see her, and found her lying on a couch in one of the sitting rooms. She was shocked at her wasted appearance and evident weakness, and wondered how Mrs. Pembroke could shut her eyes to the urgency of the case.

‘We have moved Sophy down stairs this afternoon,’ said Mrs. Pembroke. ‘She was very unwilling to make the effort, but I thought it desirable that her room should have a thorough airing.’

'If the room is ready now,' said Sophy, in a faint voice, 'I should be so glad to go up again. I am *very* tired.'

Mrs. Pembroke rang to inquire. The room would be ready in about half an hour.

'Oh, that will do very well,' said Mrs. Pembroke. 'You are much better here. I told the servants that you would not want to go up again till nearly the evening, so they have not hurried. Do not you think, Mrs. Randolph, that it is much better for her to be in a fresher atmosphere as long as possible?'

'I think we must be guided in general by the feelings of the patient on these points,' said Mrs. Randolph, who observed that Sophy was nearly fainting. She bent over the invalid, and repeated to her the messages which Agnes had sent.

Sophy opened her eyes and smiled faintly. 'Tell her I have thought a *great deal* about what she told me. It has been a comfort to me.'

Mrs. Pembroke talked on about general subjects. Mrs. Randolph kept her eye on the invalid, till, after an interval of not less than an hour, the welcome news arrived that Miss Sophia's room was ready. She was carried up stairs, but on reaching her room had an alarming hysterical attack, in the midst of which, fortunately, the medical attendant arrived. On seeing her, and hearing the circumstances which had led to the attack, he seemed annoyed, and gave strict injunctions that she should not leave her room without his sanction. Mrs. Randolph and he left the house together, and

she took the opportunity of asking him a few questions relative to his patient.

'Tis a bad case,' said he. 'In any circumstances her state would be serious; but here the difficulties are tenfold increased by false ideas of nursing.'

'I dare say,' said Mrs. Randolph, 'this is not an unfrequent occurrence in your experience?'

'Oh, by no means. I am continually encountering difficulties in one shape or other, from the prejudices and mismanagement of those entrusted with the health of others. Sometimes I meet with young persons at school, or in families, where very strict plans are enforced, who, I am convinced, have their minds overburdened, or their bodies over-fatigued; and who, perhaps, are kept on the constant stretch to escape blame and come up to the requirements made upon them. Well, I venture to hint this, and to warn against the impending evil, and directly the instructress or the mother lays the blame upon some recreation which has inconveniently crowded the next day with extra work, and proposes to abridge that, by way of relieving the sufferer, as if all work to the young, or, indeed, to the old, did not imperatively call for a proportionate amount of relaxation—the more work, the more play.'

'And that expedient of depriving young persons of some pleasure, as a kind of penalty for feeling unwell, has the further bad effect of tempting them to conceal as much as possible every feeling of weariness or indisposition, lest

they should bring upon themselves exclusion from every enjoyment. It keeps them from complaining till they are actually ill.'

'That is sometimes the object, I fancy,' said Mr. Richards. 'Well,' smiling, 'it makes work for the doctor. But to return to Miss Sophia. Mrs. Pembroke told me yesterday that she was particularly anxious to have Miss Sophia better by the time when the wedding is to take place. But I told her that she must on no account have any share in the festivities; for I could not answer for the consequences.'

'Do you think she could bear removal to our house?' asked Mrs. Randolph. 'If she could, and Mrs. Pembroke would consent, I think she would be very much better for being quite out of the bustle and excitement.'

'Indeed she would,' said the surgeon, 'and your nursing, my dear madam, would be the very thing for her. I don't believe that the removal to that short distance would fatigue or excite her half as much as twenty things she is meeting with daily at home.'

'Well, then, I will make the proposal, and shall trust to you to assist in carrying it into effect.'

Mrs. Pembroke readily gave her consent to what she acknowledged as a very kind and considerate arrangement on the part of Mrs. Randolph. It was indeed a relief to her to have her invalid daughter taken off her hands at a time when they were so full of business. The joy and gratitude of Sophy herself were great; and in the commence-

ment of the next week, under the personal superintendence of Mr. Richards, she was safely and quietly transferred to the room prepared for her at the Grange.

At first, Mrs. Randolph kept her charge in strict seclusion, allowing only occasional glimpses, even to Agnes. But when Sophy rallied a little from her extreme prostration, she was allowed to converse, not only with Agnes, but also with Dr. Randolph. She was soon won to confide to him her mental anxieties, and gratefully received from him advice and instruction. The manner in which Agnes, in that first interview, had dwelt on God's relation to us as our Father, had made a deep impression upon her, and she recurred to it frequently when talking to Dr. Randolph.

'It seems such a delightful idea,' she said; 'but is it not too good to be true? I always thought we had no right to look upon God as a Father till we were quite sure that we were believers in Christ.'

'But the act of faith in Christ does not *make* God our Father, because it is a return to Him *as such*, a saying, 'I will arise and go to my Father,' &c. The work of Christ did not purchase or procure God's fatherly concern for us, it only made a way in which it could be safely manifested. God is our Father by creation. St. Paul shows this when he quotes with approbation the words, 'For we are also His offspring,' and argues upon it, 'Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God,' &c.'

‘I thought the relation to God as a Father was lost at the Fall.’

‘It might indeed have been lost but for the redemption of Christ. But when He took our nature, and thus united our race to himself, that forfeiture was reversed; and every where we hear our Lord representing God as a Father. But we may be the children of God, in this wide sense, and yet may be living estranged from Him, neither knowing nor caring about the relation; and it is therefore only when we come to Christ, and are consecrated to Him, that we are consciously admitted into God’s family.’

‘I hope—I think—I trust I have come to Christ,’ said Sophy, hesitatingly.

‘Surely, my dear, that is a thing as easily ascertained as any other act of the mind. You must know whether you do habitually open your heart to him, and seek his forgiveness and help.’

‘But then there seem to be so many ways of deceiving oneself, else why in such books as Meade’s *Almost Christian*, for instance, are there so many and such difficult tests by which we are to try whether our faith is of the right sort?’

‘Those books may have their use, and especially to those who have to be the guides of others; though, in my opinion, they are very likely to nip religion in the bud, by directing upon it the cold blasts of suspicion. But, at any rate, they are almost as unfit for the study of a young and inexperienced Christian, or for any one of a tender and scrupulous spirit, as medical books, full of

the marks of disease, for the study of a nervous invalid. Depend upon it, if our heart condemn us not for conscious insincerity, we may have confidence towards God. Can you suppose that He who, in the days of his flesh, so bore with the worldly views, the low motives, the prejudices, and the wrong spirit of his disciples, who discerned an honest heart under all, who led them on, step by step, and never discarded any but the traitor who sold Him—do you suppose that this same Saviour is now on the watch to detect every imperfection, and to make it—if we may dare so to speak—a pretext for disappointing us in our hope?

‘Oh no! that seems too dreadful.’

‘Well, but you really treat Him as if he were an High Priest who could not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. But at the bottom of this distrust of Christ, there is distrust of God as a Father, a conception of him rather as a stern creditor, a severe and unsympathizing judge. And these notions, if I mistake not, are at the root of a great deal of the superstition of the past and of the present. First, God is looked upon as in some sense the adversary of man, and Christ as a patron who is to shield us from his wrath. Then Christ himself, his human nature being a little thrown into the shade, becomes in the mind too much identified with God to be alone trusted, and recourse is had to some more merciful and more sympathizing being to intercede with Him. And here come in Mariolatry and the worship

of the saints. Where education is against this, the soul still looks about for something to warrant trust in Christ, and either takes up with something external, as the Church—the Sacraments—or with some peculiar internal experience, and intrenches itself in that. And so it will ever be till we can fix in our minds that God is rather seeking us than we Him, and that in the will to save us, Christ and He are One.'

'But,' said Sophy, 'if God loves all men, and would have all to be saved, it does seem to me so mysterious why such numbers should never have any opportunity of coming to the knowledge of the truth. And then that awful chapter, the ninth of Romans, seems to go against salvation being intended for all.'

'That chapter and the two subsequent ones,' said Dr. Randolph, 'were not designed to give a complete view of God's purposes towards mankind, but only of one visible development of his kingdom upon earth—the transference, namely, of that kingdom from the Jews to the Gentiles. The Jews thought they had an inalienable right to it. St. Paul proves to them that it neither went by hereditary descent nor could be earned by their legal and formal righteousness. But instead of coming to the conclusion that God's love had something narrow and limited, the Apostle sums up with rapturous adoration of the wisdom which, through mysterious and apparently contradictory dispensations, had worked for the salvation of all. You will see this

if you look at the 32nd and following verses.* As to your difficulty about so many nations being left without the light of truth, it may be that God has not seen fit to tell us how He will deal with them, lest we should make His purposes an excuse for our slothfulness; but until we know all the secrets of the future, we need not, I think, look on their case as an exception to His goodness to all. It is to those who have the Gospel and yet neglect it that the awful warnings of the Scriptures apply.'

'But do you think, then, that any will be saved without Christ?'

'No, certainly; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved; but I am not so sure that those who never had an opportunity of knowing Him here will never have one hereafter. But these are things which we do best to leave in the obscurity in which the Scriptures leave them, and, except to ease your mind of a difficulty, I would not touch on them.'

'It would be a great relief,' said Sophy, after a pause, 'to feel that I need not be thinking so much about myself—to believe that God really would save me without my continually doubting about it. But I should be afraid of growing careless.'

'That would not be the result if you felt that salvation was something immediate, not future, and

* See Neander's admirable remarks on this chapter in his History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church in the Times of the Apostles.

if you set yourself to root out everything evil. Christ's work is not merely to save us from *future* misery, but from the misery of unholy and unlovely passions here—not merely to give us Heaven hereafter, but the heaven of likeness to Himself here. And whilst you are faithfully employed in co-operating with Him thus, you will not need to be asking every hour, 'Am I His or am I not?' You will feel sure that He will not disown you for failures and deficiencies so long as you cling to Him in desire and affection. One of the worst results of that excessive self-analysis is that the very feelings we seek to cultivate take flight before it. It is something with the soul as it is with the body. He who is always feeling his own pulse, watching his own symptoms, is likely to end in being ill in reality.'

Sophia Pembroke remained three weeks at the Grange. At the end of that time the marriage of her sister took place. After that was over, and a week had been allowed for the complimentary visits of the neighbourhood, Mrs. Pembroke became anxious for her daughter to return. She had improved so much under the management of Mrs. Randolph and in the quiet cheerful atmosphere of the Grange, that she was thought well enough to go with her mother to Pembroke Hall. Her brother and his wife had been staying at Hanbury Place for the wedding, and were now going to return home, and they had pressed Mrs. Pembroke to spend some weeks with them, and also to bring Sophia for the benefit of another change. Sophy

would much have preferred remaining at Milnwood. She had a nervous dread of any change; and Mrs. Randolph, who was convinced the little strength she had gained would not bear much trial, would willingly have kept her, but Mrs. Pembroke seemed bent on her point. She especially urged that she herself should be with her at Pembroke Hall, and should now be able to nurse her. Mrs. Randolph felt by no means satisfied that this would add to the safety of the measure. She suspected that the invalid would fare better if left entirely to the care of Mrs. Arthur Pembroke, who seemed a gentle and considerate person, not at all in love with the rousing plan. However, there was nothing to be said, and Mrs. Randolph contented herself with stipulating that Sophy should remain with them till the very day of departure, to avoid the excitement of two removals, and be taken up at the Grange. As Pembroke Hall was distant only seven miles, and they were to go in Mrs. Pembroke's carriage, it was hoped that the removal might be effected without much fatigue.

The last evening of Sophy's stay at the Grange was spent in quiet conversation with her friends, amongst whom Helen made one. The sick girl seemed full of solemn, grateful, and tender feelings. After going over many of the subjects on which she had previously talked with Dr. Randolph or Agnes, she said,

'I hope, if I were to be worse again, I should never feel the same alarm and anxiety that I have felt before; but there is one thing which often

comes into my thoughts when I lie awake in the night.'

'What is that?' said Dr. Randolph.

'Why,' she said, 'it is the thought of what is our state immediately after death, before the resurrection of the body. It does seem such a strange and awful thing to be only a spirit—one can form no idea of such an existence. I know there are some people who think the soul sleeps—is unconscious till the morning of the resurrection. It seems to me a very uncomfortable idea. It is not your opinion, sir, I believe, from many things I have heard you say?'

'No, certainly it is not,' said Dr. Randolph. 'It would seem to me a strange waste of existence for such a one as St. Paul, for instance, to have been removed from his useful labours on earth to be in an unconscious state for thousands of years.'

'Oh! indeed it would.'

'There is nothing, I think, in the Scriptures,' resumed Dr. Randolph, 'to countenance such a notion, except the frequent use of the term 'sleep,' as applied to the dead in Christ; but this term appears to me to be used by the apostles to mark more strongly the temporary character of their removal from earth, and, perhaps also, the contrast between their state and the perishing spoken of in 1 Cor. xv. 18,—'Then they which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished,'—the state of hopeless destruction. It is, I believe, now generally allowed by the best writers that even the Apostles partook of the impression, which we know to have prevailed

in the early Church, namely, that the end of the world was very near at hand. Even St. Paul writes in the 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians as if it might be expected in that generation. This would make him think it less necessary to dwell upon the interval between death and the resurrection, which he expected would be short. But in his later Epistles, when further revelations or his own observations convinced him that the coming of Christ was not so near, he dwells with more interest on the intermediate state, and expresses a desire to depart and be with Christ. 'And how could,' as Neander says, 'a man of such fiery zeal, full of activity for God, prefer a state of sleep or a dreamy, shadowy life, to a life such as he led, contending earnestly for the kingdom of God?'

'It is that *shadowy* life which is to me so uncomfortable to think of,' said Sophy.

'Well, my dear,' said Dr. Randolph, 'St. Paul seems to have had the same feeling, for he says, 'not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.' What those expressions mean we cannot fully understand; but, in the 15th of 1st Corinthians, the Apostle intimates that the body which shall be raised is not that corruptible body which is buried, but the germ of being which expands into a spiritual body; and it may be that that may begin its growth immediately after death, and be only perfected in glory at the general Resurrection.

'In the absence of very clear and distinct statements in God's word, one may, I think, derive assis-

tance from the analogy of God's works and dealings, and from them I should infer that every successive stage of existence will be an advance upon the preceding, and that, therefore, when this flesh and blood, which St. Paul says cannot inherit the kingdom of God—when this mortal garment falls from us, we shall enter on a higher and more true life, the spirit expressing itself in a form invisible indeed to mortal eyes, but recognisable by spiritual apprehensions. But after all, these are points beyond our power of deciding; we must leave them with our Father. The great comfort is, that whether we wake or sleep, we shall live together with Him. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and the living.'

They were silent for some time. Sophy's eyes were fixed on the boughs of a magnificent chesnut-tree, visible from the window. This tree, which stood in the churchyard, and round which the graves of many of the villagers were clustered, was now in full flower, for it was the month of May. A bright star was just rising above it.

'What are you looking at so earnestly, dear Sophy?' whispered Agnes, as Dr. Randolph rose from his seat to welcome Mr. Hargreave, who had just come in to say good bye to the invalid.

'I am looking at the chesnut-tree, dear,' whispered Sophy, in return. 'I shall always associate it in my mind with this dear room and the blessed truths I have heard in it.'

After a little more conversation, Mrs. Randolph

hastened her charge to bed. The next day she journeyed to Pembroke Hall.

It was not more than a week after Sophy's departure that Dr. Randolph came into the sitting-room, shortly after breakfast, with a note in his hand.

'I have bad news for you, I am sorry to say,' said he to Mrs. Randolph. 'Here is Mr. Pembroke's servant come over with this note, the purport of which (it is from Mrs. Arthur Pembroke) is to say that poor Sophy is very ill, and has expressed a wish to see me.'

'Oh, do go, papa!' exclaimed Agnes, earnestly, 'and could I—or mamma?'

'I think it will be best for me to go alone; for from the tenour of the note, and from what I can learn from the servant, there is no time to be lost.'

The facts of the case were these: Sophy had been out one day for a drive with her mother in an open carriage—a cold east wind had been in their faces returning—the invalid had taken cold, and inflammation had come on. The extent of the danger had not been perceived till the day before that on which the tidings had arrived at Milnwood, but a physician from London had then seen her and given a very unfavourable opinion. Mrs. Arthur Pembroke, finding that her mind ran much upon her friends at the Grange, kindly determined to send over early in the morning, and to request Dr. Randolph, if possible, to come.

He found the case even worse than he had expected, though Mrs. Pembroke was still convinced

the attack would pass over, and that her daughter would recover. She assured him Sophy was something better, took him up stairs, and, though with evident reluctance, left him with her. Her countenance lighted up with joy when he approached, and she held his hand for some time without speaking.

‘I was afraid I should not see you again,’ she said, after awhile. ‘I shall not be here long.’

‘You do not now feel alarm at the prospect?’ he said.

‘Oh, no; I feel that God is love—that He is our Father. Though I am sinful—unworthy—Christ is worthy.’

‘You will soon know what good things God hath prepared for them that love Him. Have you any of that shrinking from a change of state that you spoke of?’

‘No; I feel that I am in a Father’s hand. I am not afraid of anything that can happen to me.’

‘That is right; we may well trust Him. This is Life Eternal, to know Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. Whether we wake or sleep, we shall live together with Him.’

‘I remember,’ said Sophy, ‘that last conversation. Give Agnes my dear love, and tell her I have often thought of the *chesnut-tree*,—she will know what I mean. Ah! how thankful I am that I went to stay with you.’

‘And I am deeply thankful, my love, that the time we had together helped to fortify you for your hour of need.’

Dr. Randolph then left her to call on the clergyman of the parish, and make arrangements for administering to her the Holy Communion. He found the clergyman much engaged, and thankful to accept his offer of officiating in his stead.

After this service, the dying girl was too much exhausted for any further conversation; and Dr. Randolph, receiving her whispered thanks and blessings, took a solemn farewell, and returned to the Grange.

A note, the next morning, announced the intelligence that Sophy had died in the night.

CHAPTER XV.

FEMALE EDUCATION.

Let her make herself her own,
To give or keep, to live and learn, and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.

TENNYSON'S *Princess*.

THE parish of Milnwood, unpromising and difficult to work as it was, was gradually brought under culture by the zealous exertions of Mr. Hargreave. His aim was to bring the children not only of the village, but also of the outlying hamlets under instruction, and also to place religious services within the reach of the adult population. He was ably seconded in all his measures by Dr. Randolph. By his advice, he pursued a friendly and conciliatory line of conduct towards dissenters. Finding that in the hamlet of Longfield, the most distant and most populous corner of the parish, the dissenters had already built a meeting house, got together a Sunday-school, and established a Sunday service, he determined to leave this place to them, and to direct his efforts to other and darker hamlets. He called upon the minister—a zealous young farmer—invited him to his house, lent him books, and by degrees so won his confidence, that without any attempts at proselytism, he obtained a most beneficial influence over his proceedings.

He gave him the means of adding to his zeal knowledge. He often said of this young man, that if every one like him would aim to diffuse light in his own immediate neighbourhood, there would be few dark corners in the land.

In the other hamlet, Oak Green, he obtained a large room, gathered together an evening school, and employed a suitable person in the joint capacity of schoolmaster and Scripture reader.

Helen assisted Mr. Hargreave to the extent of her power in all parish work. She felt deeply the import of a remark often made by Dr. Randolph, that every Christian is first a disciple, then an apostle.* But she felt also that she was somewhat in the same condition as those mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews, who when the time was come in which they ought to have been teachers, had need to be taught again the first principles of the oracles of God. She often regretted to Dr. Randolph how much of her life had been passed without any advance either spiritual or intellectual. He, however, was of opinion that in those painful times, she had learned lessons of experience, which would tell powerfully on her future usefulness. He was convinced that, by her clear intellect and love of truth, she was fitted, or might easily become fitted, for important services, and he was determined to do his part towards the thorough cultivation of her mind.

He had a feeling of dissatisfaction with the na-

* See WILSON'S *Bampton Lectures*.

ture of female education in general—not so much with the kind of study pursued as with the short period devoted to it—the desultory and unprofitable way in which girls spend their time when they first leave their schoolrooms, and are thrown upon their own resources. ‘Girls are often willing enough,’ he said, ‘to employ themselves usefully, if they only knew how; you see them undertaking charitable visits, tract distribution, and so on; but if the culture of the intellect does not go on simultaneously, the mind becomes cramped, and the interest is concentrated upon mere outward details. I am convinced, too,’ he would say, ‘that generally speaking, the best instructors of the poor and young are those who have the widest sweep of the field of human history and experience, and books are one means of acquiring this.’ He had been struck by what Helen had told him of the difficulties she had met with at home, in getting time and leave to carry on her education, and he believed that the case was by no means a singular one. The best way to meet this difficulty would be, he considered, to form something of a class for united study. He had an idea that with a year or two of preparation under his teaching, Helen might do this—might collect a number of young persons to read with her, and thus find occupation suitable to her powers. He therefore proposed to her to devote two mornings a week to read under his direction, Agnes being her companion in study. The offer, of course, was joyfully accepted.

Dr. Randolph had observed the characters of the rest of the Tyrrel family, and saw with regret

how little promising they were. The younger daughters were weak and frivolous, and entirely bent upon that one object which had been originally set before them—advantageous marriage. They were civil and friendly to the Randolph and Hargreave families, but took no interest either in parochial work or intellectual association.

It was in the winter which followed poor Sophy's death, that Helen became regularly a pupil of Dr. Randolph, and the reading which she engaged in had the most beneficial effect on her mind. The two days were subsequently increased to three, as the interest both of tutor and pupils deepened. Two of these days were devoted to history, and one to mental and moral philosophy. The observations of Dr. Randolph, in the course of their reading, did not fail to point out how the subjects illustrate one another, and the light which both throw on man's religious history, on what it *has been*, on *what it ought to have been*, on *what it will be*.*

They were deep in these reflections one morning in February, seated around Dr. Randolph's library table, which was strewn with books—English, German, and Greek, when the door was suddenly opened, and a gentleman walked in.

Dr. Randolph flung down the book which he was explaining, and went forward to meet the intruder.

* 'Die religiöse Entwicklung das höchste ziel der Geschichte.' (Religious development the highest end of History.) NEANDER'S Remarks on the Speech of St. Paul at Athens, Acts xvii. 28. Geschichte der Pflanzung und Leitung der Christlichen Kirche.

‘Fielding, my dear fellow ! I did not know you were in England.’

‘Nor was I, a week ago, nor shall I be a week hence. Came over on some business, and finding that I had a day to spare, and that you were so near London, I hurried down to see you, not knowing otherwise when we might meet again. But I am sadly disturbing your—pupils, are they ?’ smilingly glancing at the volume which had been laid down by Dr. Randolph, Aristotle’s *Ethics* in the original. ‘When I last saw you, you were surrounded by pupils of a rougher sex,’ bowing to Helen, who was assisting Agnes to rise. ‘These are not your daughters ?’ he added, holding the door open to let them pass.

‘One of them is my daughter,’ said Dr. Randolph ; ‘don’t you remember Agnes ?’

‘I was so often absent from home, or confined to my room, at the time that Mr. Fielding was last in England,’ said Agnes, ‘that I think he hardly saw me. I should not have known him.’

‘Forgive me my forgetfulness, Miss Agnes,’ said Mr. Fielding. ‘I remember one Miss Randolph,—but I am keeping you standing ; we can reserve our reminiscences till a better opportunity, for I mean to stay out the day, if you will let me.’

‘The daughter whom you recollected,’ said Dr. Randolph, when Agnes and Helen had quitted the room, ‘is my eldest, and Hargreave’s wife. You remember Hargreave ?’

‘To be sure I do ; a Magdalen man, and a very nice fellow.’

‘He lives over the way; I will send and tell him you are here; and he will come and dine with us. Of course you will stay till the end of the week.’

‘No, I thank you, I must be off to-morrow morning. I am to be at Lisbon again next week.’

‘I suppose you have left your wife there? How is she?’

‘No better at all. I shall probably bring her to England in the summer, if she is well enough to bear it; but I have great doubts.’

‘Who is Mr. Fielding?’ said Helen to Agnes, as she was preparing to go home.

‘He is an old and intimate friend of papa’s. I believe, but I am not sure, that he was once his pupil. He has been abroad for the last three or four years with his wife, who is in very delicate health.’

Mr. Fielding, at dinner, had quite established himself with Agnes on the footing of an old acquaintance. He rallied her a little on the depth of her studies, and asked her if she or her friend was reading for a degree.

‘Do you then think,’ replied Agnes, ‘that knowledge is never to be sought without a view to some immediate use?’

‘Not exactly so,’ said Mr. Fielding, ‘but we *are* accustomed, certainly, to associate certain studies with certain vocations in life, and also to think that woman’s vocation happily exempts her from most of the weary mental labour that men have to undergo.’

Agnes was just going to ask him what he con-

sidered to be woman's special vocation, when her father interposed.

'I think that is a mistake, Fielding. A mistake, I mean, to suppose that education ought to be conducted with an exclusive view to some foreseen vocation. It is an argument which has been used not merely about the education of women, but against the education of the poor. 'We are unfitting them for their station,' it is said. Now, I think we ought to have respect to man, not merely as an instrument to perform certain pieces of work which we have portioned out for him in our scheme, but as a spiritual and immortal being, a member of the family of God. If God has endowed him with any powers of acquiring knowledge, it is quite right those powers should be cultivated to the utmost extent opportunity will allow. And it is the duty of his fellow-men to furnish him with all the help they can fairly and justly put within his reach. He who gave the powers, and who gives the means of cultivating them, will take care that what is acquired by them shall not be wasted. If any such is found too richly endowed for its sphere of action here, it is more than you or I can determine that its endowments shall not subserve its sphere of action hereafter. In *that sense* even, our works may follow us. But even in reference to this world, I am very much inclined to think that all kinds of work are better done by those who know something beyond the immediate matter in hand. Now, to take the vocation of women, which you mentioned just now,

I suppose you would consider that to be marriage, with its concomitants, domestic management and maternal duties?

'Well,' said Mr. Fielding, 'I do not mean that every woman is doomed to marry under penalty of being false to her destiny; but I certainly should say that a woman's vocation is in some relation or other to be a helpmate to man—his *supplement*. Do not be offended at my term, Miss Randolph; I mean nothing depreciatory by it.'

'Nor does it imply anything depreciatory,' said Agnes; 'for a supplement often contains matter more curious and valuable than the book itself.'

'Your definition, Fielding,' said Dr. Randolph, 'is, I think, correct. My own opinion of the relation of the two sexes, and more especially of its most perfect form, marriage, is that of the union of two spirits intended for the purification and exaltation of both, by the force of contrast, giving to each sex what it wants,—to the one moral strength, and that sense of justice in which it is deficient; to the other that sympathy, gentleness, tenderness, which it peculiarly needs.'

'So you think women deficient in a sense of justice?'

'Of course, one can only speak generally; there are large exceptions to the rule. But I certainly think you may observe that the ordinary tendency of women is to judge a question less by its merits than by some extraneous consideration,—to be more influenced by taste than judgment. I am far from saying that there is not an intuitive sense, a kind

of tact, which, when sides are nearly balanced, finds its way to the truth ; but this does not do to put in the place of judgment, only to be used as perfective of it. On the other hand, men are inclined to decide a thing too much according to the pure reason of the case, and not to make sufficient allowance for individual differences,—to go right straight forward without looking out for the stragglers.'

'Your remarks must be taken very generally,' said Mrs. Randolph ; 'for I have known men with as little justice as any woman, and women with *less* feeling than any man I have seen.'

'Of course, I speak of the masculine and feminine *types* of character, not of individual exhibitions of them,' said Dr. Randolph. 'The end to be gained is, therefore, as I said a little while since, to improve each sex by contact with the other. Now, I say that an extended acquaintance with literature gives a woman many of the advantages which she would derive from contact with superior men. She gets familiar with the thoughts of such men ; her strength of mind and clearness of judgment are cultivated without at all of necessity destroying her finer instincts. And when she has been accustomed to see in books that there are two sides to most questions, she is ten times more accessible to the justice of an argument when put before her by a living person. She is likely to be free from that narrow-minded, self-opinionated prejudice which compels one to leave so many women with the feeling that it is impossible to

argue with them, and also from that frivolous and vexatious habit of making everything a *personal* question.'

Mr. Fielding sighed involuntarily. He had had some experience of the evils thus touched upon. Dr. Randolph, who was unacquainted with the minutiae of his domestic position, pursued his subject without being aware of its having any peculiar significancy.

'Then, if we only consider the nature of the influence women have, *married* women, pre-eminently, we shall not, I think, be disposed to say that a woman can have too much sense or information for her proper vocation. Only think how many important questions are talked over and decided by the fireside. How many times does the wife give a casting vote in the matter of some arrangement which is to affect the welfare of children, servants, work people, or dependents. Then, if you look a little further, how much influence have women in what is called the *religious world*. Who are the foremost critics and judges of a clergyman's orthodoxy? Not generally the men, but the ladies of his congregation. It has been said that there is something *feminine* in the character of our religion at the present day. If it be so, it is probably owing to the colour given to it by women of narrow mind and defective cultivation, whose zeal and activity gain them an overweight of influence.'

'Ay,' said Mr. Fielding, 'but in a great measure, remember, the clergy help to keep their

female friends down, by denouncing, or at least looking coldly upon intellectual advance.'

'There is no doubt a mutual re-action,' replied Dr. Randolph, 'and so there is in all the relations of the sexes; and whilst our sex show that they prefer a pretty face, a lively agreeable manner, and some showy accomplishments, to all the higher qualities of mind and heart, women will be apt to covet no further distinction.'

Mr. Fielding sighed again. 'It is too true,' he said. 'Men are great simpletons in this matter, but they generally find out their mistake!'

'Yes; but their experience does not profit others. However, I wish women were less dependent on marriage—that they were dependent on it only for a higher kind of happiness, and not for tolerable comfort and respectability; but it cannot be denied that when the lot of single women in our class, who have not an independent provision, is so hard as it is, there must be a great temptation to seek at all risks exemption from dependence, toil, poverty, and neglect.'

'There are so few things women can do to earn a subsistence without loss of station,' said Mr. Fielding.

'There is but one thing, and that is teaching; and that must generally be in the department of a governess.'

'A hard life that, I have no doubt.'

'It is the nearest approach to domestic slavery of anything existing in our society, except perhaps a salaried companion. You are to labour with

every faculty of your mind, every energy of your body, without sympathy, often amidst obstructions, throughout life perhaps, certainly through youth, for the remuneration is seldom such as to enable the labourer to save enough to keep her in sickness, or in age; and her isolated position is a fresh obstacle to her forming a matrimonial connexion. I am speaking, of course, of resident governesses. The daily governess escapes the isolation, and some other of the evils; but her pay is less and her toil still harder.

‘It is a sad case, truly,’ said Mr. Fielding, ‘but surely much might be done if employers were more just and kind.’

‘Much might, and much is, no doubt, in individual cases; but still the great evil is inherent in the position itself. The governess is alone in the family—except in some rare cases; she may be kindly and courteously treated, but she has no companionship, no society of equals. She is the only one of her class. Her hereditary rank may be equal to that of her employers; her breeding may be superior, but there is still the relation of employer and employed; and unless there is rare superiority of mind on both sides, it will be wonderful if she does not feel it. To the visitors of the family she is an object of kind condescension, but not of free intimacy. She is always *the obliged* party. Exceptions of course there are, where a real attachment, a confidential friendship, springs up between the *family* and the *governess*; and she is treated as an elder daughter or a maiden sister would be,

who should for love undertake the instruction of the children. But these are not cases which can be expected to occur often, and even where they do, a time will come when the children will no longer need instruction, and then the cherished friend must go and begin again in some family, only known, perhaps, through a paid agent. These things might be borne cheerfully, if they were for only ten, fifteen, or twenty years, during which time a *man* will generally win for himself an independent position; but a woman, unless she is so fortunate as to have friends who can help her with capital enough to commence a school, has no hope of any advancement; and it is well if at forty she is not too far worn down to do much good in the arduous business of school keeping.'

'You make one really shudder,' said Mr. Fielding. 'What can be done? for I know you are not one of those who sit lamenting over ills without ever thinking of their cure. What plans have you in your head? Remember, you have three objects before you. To get women better educated; to get them something to do; and—but I hardly need state the third, for if there were more means of employment, governesses would be better off. What would you do in the first place? how would you extend the education of girls?'

'I do not know that I should care to meddle much with mere school or school-room education. I think girls learn enough, perhaps a little too much, in that period. It is *after* they leave school that I would take them in hand. Then, just when

they have got a fair start for self-education, every thing is dropped, or if not wholly dropped, carried on in a broken, desultory manner, till after a time it is given up in despair, and the young lady stands still for ever on her routine stock of summaries, catechisms, and the like. Well, I should like to see established in every town, classes for the study of history on an enlarged plan—such a plan as is laid down in Arnold's incomparable Lectures—classes for scientific study, for languages, (though they are generally pretty well taught at school); for moral philosophy, political economy—any subject which would usefully enlarge the sphere of thought. These classes to be conducted by really good teachers, either men, or women trained by men. Young ladies who are living at home might, without any great difficulty, attend these classes two or three times a week, and on the intermediate days, they would have regular occupation in reading and preparing for the class. There might be at intervals, something of an examination, and money prizes awarded, to be raised by subscription, for the purchase of valuable books. In short, I should like to see some of the benefits put in the reach of provincials which the dwellers in the metropolis have in Queen's College and similar institutions.'

'The plan sounds well, certainly, and would, of necessity, have a great effect upon female education,' said Mr. Fielding.

'And through that on female character,' added Dr. Randolph. 'Incalculable, in my opinion, are

the evils which flow from a low standard of mental culture for women. If one could ensure that one 'not learned save in gracious household wants,' should have good sense, humility, tractableness, and above all, a willingness to tolerate minds and attainments superior to her own, she might still do good, and diffuse much happiness, but I cannot imagine a much more pitiable condition than to be linked, still more to be subordinated, to a person of narrow mind, limited knowledge, incapable of comprehending the feelings of others, and yet fully possessed with her right and competency to decide every question for every body.'

'Bad enough, indeed,' said Mr. Fielding, sighing.

'But you do not mean, of course,' interposed Mrs. Randolph, 'that all the faults in female character may be removed by greater intellectual cultivation?'

'Certainly not,' replied Dr. Randolph; 'though I think a great many might. Still there would be women highly cultivated, well informed, but thoroughly overbearing and selfish, with plenty of discernment, plenty of quickness in divining the thoughts and feelings of others, but divining them only to trample on them with cold and heartless indifference, doing whatsoever their hand findeth to do, doing it well, and never lacking reasons to make it appear the right thing. Woe to those who have ought to do with them!'

'But now as to your second point,' said Mr. Fielding.

‘Well, for the second point, the finding more independent employment for women, more means by which they may gain a comfortable maintenance without being obliged to sell themselves for board and lodging—I see not my way clear. There are many things, no doubt, which women could do which the customs of society at present forbid them to do. But then it must be remembered that this increase of candidates for employments now engrossed by men, might tell upon their interests in another way. Fewer men would be able to keep a wife; marriage would be longer delayed to many; and thus the chances of family life diminished.’

‘Yes, that would be the result, no doubt,’ said Mr. Fielding; ‘and after all a woman is better off, and more in her place married to a man who can cherish and maintain her, than struggling for prizes in the great world-market.’

‘And for my third point,’ resumed Dr. Randolph, ‘the hardships of a governess life, the only effectual remedy must be in the spread of that Christian spirit, so different from that which usurps the name, that true charity which would not suffer the mother of a family to rest satisfied until the instructress of her children should be as well cared for as the children themselves, should have not merely the means of living, but of enjoying life, plenty of rest and recreation, fitting society and all things which might tend to keep her healthy, hopeful, and happy. But I may add that the adoption of the classes I have spoken of, would offer a fresh field of occupation to women who

have had opportunities of fitting themselves for undertaking these higher branches of instruction.'

Mrs. Randolph availed herself of this close of the subject to retire with Agnes to the drawing room, where they were joined by Mr. and Mrs. Hargreave, who had been unable to come to dinner, and by Helen, who had been asked to come in to tea. The evening's conversation was chiefly between Mr. Fielding, and Mr. Hargreave, on old college friendships, &c.

'Do you know what sort of a person Mrs. Fielding is?' said Mrs. Randolph to her husband, when they were alone. 'I fancied Mr. Fielding looked a little uncomfortable, when you were inveighing so warmly against inferior women.'

'Did he indeed? I am sorry for that. I was carried away by the subject, and did not remark it. No, I know very little about his wife. I have seen her a few times, but always in large parties. She had a large fortune, and was reckoned very handsome, but latterly had very bad health. Did you never see her?'

'Yes, I think I met her once soon after they were married; and now I recur to it, I remember the impression she made on me was, that of a proud and somewhat affected person.'

'I am sorry indeed,' said Dr. Randolph, 'sorry for him, and sorry that the conversation took that turn, but he must have seen by my remarks that I was perfectly unconscious of any thing which could give the subject a sting. However, I imagine

whatever disappointment he may have had in his wife, it is now almost a thing of the past, for from what he tells me, I should think there cannot be much hope of her long continuance here.'

CHAPTER XVI.

HELEN—A 'SINGLE WOMAN OF A CERTAIN AGE'

The thought of marriage, even from a really good and friendly intention, accompanied by mutual esteem and liking, without that deep, soul-pervading feeling which we commonly call love, was always repugnant to me, and it would have gone against my whole nature to have married in such a fashion.

WILLIAM VON HUMBOLDT.

Just looking round for the odd jobs God leaves in the world for such as old maids to do. There's plenty of such work, and there's the blessing of God on them as does it.'

LIBBIE MARSH'S *Three Eras*.

If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

LUKE xvi. 12.

FIVE years and a half had now elapsed since the memorable autumn at Broadstairs, and Helen Tyrrel was in her thirty-ninth year, and regarded by her family as inevitably doomed to become an old maid.

The prospect of such a destiny did not appal her. The feelings which had embittered her tears at her sister's bridal were gone and forgotten, or, if remembered, remembered as matter for repentance. She had changed the 'I' into 'We,' and was willing to live for others, in any relation her Father should appoint, secure that in it He would carry on her training for eternal life.

She was at no loss for objects of interest either at home or abroad. She assisted Mr. Hargreave with the schools and the poor; and she had now, on Dr. Randolph's plan, undertaken to read with a class of young ladies beyond the school-room age. To them she imparted some of that knowledge she had gained and was still gaining from Dr. Randolph. She took much interest in this employment, and found that in the course of their study of history, of English literature, &c., she had opportunities of clearing their moral vision and elevating their religious standing far more available than she could have had in any other way. The meetings were held alternately at different houses; and when they took place at the Grange or the Vicarage, she generally had the presence and help of Agnes.

In her own family Helen's value had greatly increased. There was no longer that complete severance between her inner and her outer life. She no longer sate silent in the domestic circle, or confined her remarks to the purest commonplace. She talked freely on every topic, but in a Christian spirit, not perpetually quoting Scripture or enamelling her conversation with hackneyed religious phrases, but studying to take and express a Christian view of everything. She was, of course, often contradicted, but she took it patiently, not with an air of martyr-like resignation, but as one who gave her opponent credit for meaning what was right, and could allow for misapprehension. She endeavoured to elicit the *best* feelings of others, and

by this means she often shamed away the contrary ones.

She had always been a favourite of her father's, and his preference for her increased as life went on. He felt, though he did not express it, that she was really the 'salt' of the house; and he no longer fretted that she had not been removed by marriage. Mrs. Tyrrel could not join in this feeling. She was not fond of Helen, though she no longer felt the same disappointment in her. She saw she was esteemed and valued by persons of discernment. She respected her, and treated her with far more consideration than formerly, but she was not one who liked to delegate any household authority; and a single, middle-aged daughter was rather an annoyance to her. Helen, however, was so gentle and unassuming, that she could not find a cause of complaint.

Helen had so far gained on her sisters that they often now accompanied her in her visits to the poor; and as it was her practice to call on them as neighbours, and not always with the apparent purpose of relieving and instructing them,* they found themselves tolerably at home in these visits. There was no great improvement in Emma and Harriet, but at least they had begun to resort to their sister as a friend and counsellor; and just as she had ceased to assert any superiority over them, she found she had risen to the highest place in their estimation.

* See ARNOLD'S *Sermons*, Vol. ii. Sermon 33, p. 362.

The brother who had gone abroad was dead, and of their married brother they saw but little. His profession tied him much to home, and his wife was not a favourite at Milnwood. Helen had tried to promote greater cordiality, but with little effect.

Mrs. Stevens had died about a year previous to this time. The attentions of her eldest niece had been her greatest comfort during her long illness, and next to them the kindness of Dr. and Mrs. Randolph, who frequently visited her, and had the satisfaction to find, that at Broadstairs she too had received truths which now extracted the sting from death.

The tie of friendship and sisterly intimacy with Mrs. Mordaunt, originally slackened and well nigh broken by Helen's religious exclusiveness, had not re-knit when the cause of estrangement was removed. Mr. Mordaunt indeed rejoiced at Helen's relinquishment of troublesome peculiarities, and occasionally proposed her coming up to them, but his wife had lost the habit of having her sister with her, and Helen also cared not much to leave Milnwood. Her visits to London were few and brief, and she was almost a stranger to her sister's acquaintance.

It happened, however, that in the year of which we are writing, and towards the close of the London season, Helen was paying a visit to her married brother, when she was summoned to town on some business connected with the will of her aunt, Mrs. Stevens, under which she was entitled to a small

legacy. She wrote to Mrs. Mordaunt to ask her to receive her, and came accordingly. The notice had been short, and when she arrived she found that they expected friends that evening. Mrs. Mordaunt had lately moved into a large house at Kensington, Mr. Mordaunt having received an accession of fortune on the death of his father; the appointments of their household were much increased in elegance; and Helen felt her quiet black silk dress scarcely in character with the appearance of the fashionably-dressed people who assembled in the handsome drawing-rooms. There was, however, a refinement and good taste about her appearance which the costliest dress would scarce have improved.

‘Who is that lady in black?’ said a gentleman, who had come in late, to a friend, by whose side he found himself.

‘That lady in spectacles, sitting on a sofa? That is Lady Barnard.’

‘No—not Lady Barnard; a younger woman,—she is placed a little behind the sofa—there! now she is leaning forwards.’

The lady questioned, put up her glass. ‘I have not the least idea,—I never saw her before. No one seems to be speaking to her; perhaps she is Mrs. Mordaunt’s governess.’

‘Well, whoever she is, I have some idea that I ought to know her, though I cannot tell where I have seen her. I shall go and try if I can make her out.’

He moved towards the spot, saying to himself, 'Governess—education. Ah! now I have it,—it is the Randolphs' friend,—so it is'

At this moment Helen looked up, and immediately recognised Mr. Fielding. He came up to her side, and accosted her.

'If I am not mistaken we have met before. Did I not see you about two years ago at Dr. Randolph's, at Milnwood?'

'You did. I believe I am speaking to Mr. Fielding?'

He bowed. 'And I, to—— Forgive me, but your name is not present to my recollection.'

'My name is Tyrrel; Miss Tyrrel.'

'Well, Miss Tyrrel, though we saw but little of each other at our former meeting, will you allow me to claim you as an acquaintance?'

'Very willingly. It is pleasant to recognise anything of a former acquaintance in this crowded solitude.'

'You are a stranger here?'

'Not exactly; but I do not often come to town.'

'You reside at Milnwood?'

'Yes.'

'Is it the severity of your studies,' smiling, 'which keeps you so much in the country?'

'Hardly that; but I *have* a good many engagements either as a learner or a teacher.'

'You are staying in London now?'

'Yes; I came to Mrs. Mordaunt only to-day.'

'Poor thing,' thought Mr. Fielding, convinced that his friend had guessed rightly; 'she feels her.

self strange enough, I dare say.' And, taking a seat by her, he determined to devote as much of his attention to her as possible.

At this moment Mrs. Mordaunt came towards them.

'Oh, Helen! there you are; I could not think where you had placed yourself. Mr. Fielding, I did not know you were in the room. You seem to have found out my sister, so I need not introduce you.'

'I have found a lady who is a former acquaintance of mine, but I had small suspicion she was a sister of yours.'

'Really! pray where did you meet?'

'At Milnwood; at Dr. Randolph's.'

'Oh, indeed! Why, Helen, I wonder you never mentioned Mr. Fielding. In your small circle I should think you can have no excuse for forgetting an acquaintance?'

'We only met one evening, Mrs. Mordaunt, so that Miss Tyrrel could hardly consider me of sufficient importance to form the subject of a letter. I might scarcely have remembered the meeting, perhaps, but for some circumstances which fixed it in my memory.'

'Did you know my sister at that time?' said Helen when Mrs. Mordaunt turned from them to speak to some one else.

'No; I think not. Let me see,—it was in the spring of 18—. No—it was not till after that time that I was introduced to Mrs. Mordaunt. Mordaunt I have known, more or less intimately, for

many years. I am a sort of parishioner of his, that is, I have warehouses in his parish in the City. But now tell me all about our Milnwood friends. I should have been to see them, but for the last two years and a half I have had so much domestic trouble, and have been so unsettled, that I have sadly neglected my friends. I wrote, however, to Dr. Randolph, last autumn, proposing to go down for a week, but they were then absent from home.'

Some pleasant conversation then followed about the Randolphs, Hargreaves, the parish, &c., till Mrs. Mordaunt, who thought Mr. Fielding had been engrossed long enough, came back to them and called Helen away. Mr. Fielding soon after left the room.

'It is curious enough that you should know Fielding, Helen,' said Mr. Mordaunt to her next morning, at their late breakfast. 'How did it come about?'

Helen repeated the circumstances of their meeting.

'Ah! that must have been the spring he lost his wife,' said Mr. Mordaunt.

'I think I recollect,' said Helen, 'there was something said about an invalid wife whom he had left at Lisbon.'

'Well, she died shortly after, at Lisbon, or Malaga, I forget which. I have known him on and off a long time, but this last winter he took a house at Bayswater, and settled down with his children. Since then we have been quite intimate. He is a most excellent fellow, truly benevolent and

charitable; and I'll tell you what, Helen,' he added, smiling, 'it would be no bad look out for you if you could catch him, for he is very rich.'

'I do not think Helen has much chance,' said Mrs. Mordaunt, drily.

'Why not, my dear?'

'Oh! for a hundred reasons. Men like Mr. Fielding are very particular whom they marry. His first wife had a good fortune, and was very handsome, I believe.'

'But not very wise; so I have been told by those who knew her well. She had a bad temper, too, I fancy, and they were anything but happy together; so I should think he was likely to look out for good sense and good humour, even if it were only for the sake of a little variety.'

'With all due deference to Helen's qualifications in those respects,' said Mrs. Mordaunt, laying considerable stress on the words, 'I still think her chance is not much. Men of Mr. Fielding's age generally like a *young* wife.'

'My dear,' said Mr. Mordaunt, maliciously, 'those who live in glass houses—you know.'

'Oh! as to that,' said Mrs. Mordaunt, her colour heightening, 'every one knows that the age which stamps a single woman as—as an old maid, is, in fact, only the prime of life to a married woman. Married women always look younger than single ones. I am sure, Helen, you must acknowledge that.'

'I think,' replied Helen, 'that it may arise partly from this, that there is a correspondence between

their age and their position, whereas single women at thirty, or even forty, are sometimes as dependent as girls of twenty; and hence they look old in relation to the place they are occupying in society. But as to *really* looking old or young, that, I imagine, depends chiefly on health of body and mind.'

'Yes, and in that view,' resumed Mrs. Mordaunt, 'one can see why single women should look old. I never can believe but that a single woman must feel that she has missed the great object of her life. She must always, let her situation be ever so easy, have a feeling of disappointment and mortification. She must feel that she has been overlooked, rejected,—that others have been preferred before her.'

'May she not feel,' said Helen, 'that to a Christian woman there is a peculiar privilege in the single state—namely, that she may attend on the Lord without distraction?'

'It does all very well to talk fine,' said her sister, 'by way of comfort, when other hopes fail; but I imagine few people think much of the privilege whilst they have any chance left.'

'Extraordinary devotion is only for extraordinary characters,' said Mr. Mordaunt, drily. 'I read, however, only the other day though, in a periodical, a sentiment to the effect, that the most estimable and admirable amongst the sex are often those who are left unmarried.'

'Not a very polite sentiment to quote to a wife,' said Mrs. Mordaunt, reddening.

‘Why, if we come to politeness,’ replied her husband, ‘it is hardly polite for us to canvass such a topic before Helen.’

‘Oh! never mind me!’ said Helen,—‘the subject rather interests me, and I would as soon discuss it as any other. If I were to be put on my personal defence, and required to show cause why I had not got married, I should say that it has always been my purpose to remain single till I should be asked by some one whom it would be suffering to refuse, and it is not every one who can meet with such in a small country circle. But in defence of my sisterhood generally, you must remember, Julia, when you speak of being neglected, feeling mortified, &c., that it is not always to be inferred because a woman is unmarried that she is so perforce. Some are kept single from early disappointments.’

‘Oh, yes, every single woman, of course, has had great experience in affairs of the heart,’ said Julia, sarcastically.

‘What you say, Helen,’ said Mr. Mordaunt, ‘about the small opportunities some women have of meeting with any one worth having is very just, and I believe some of the nicest women are in that predicament,—too good for the men that are about them; but there’s no need to be discouraged—better late than never; and I can tell you for your comfort, that there are some women better looking and more pleasing altogether at five and thirty than at five and twenty.’

‘If Helen is wise,’ said Mrs. Mordaunt, ‘she will

not suffer herself to be flattered with any foolish hopes about marrying. At her age it is very unlikely.'

'Thank you both,' said Helen; 'you, Charles, for your comfort, and you, Julia, for your warning, but I don't think I much need either. I am quite resigned to my fate, and quite determined to abide by my rule, which is worth anything when I was young, is worth still more now that my taste is more formed.'

'As to that,' said Charles,—but his further remarks were cut short by the announcement and entrance of the very person, with the discussion of whom the conversation had begun.

'I am an early visitor,' said Mr. Fielding, 'but I came to see if Mrs. Mordaunt and her sister would like to go with me at two o'clock, to see that collection of Wilkinson's which we were speaking of the other day.'

'Oh! I should like it of all things!' said Mrs. Mordaunt. 'Helen, I don't know whether you care much about such exhibitions,—but if you do not like to go—'

'What is it you are going to see?' said Helen.

'Oh, something quite in your way, Miss Tyrrel,' exclaimed Mr. Fielding; 'pictures, medals, autographs, illustrations of history,—you must go.'

'Thank you; then I will, if I can without inconveniencing any one.'

'Then I will call for you both at two o'clock. Mordaunt, are you going into the city?'

‘Well, I was not; but I will go with you if you have your cab here.’

‘Come along, then.’

Mr. Fielding came at the appointed time, accompanied by his daughter, a girl about fifteen, with a womanly, decided air, which made her look older. They all went together in Mrs. Mordaunt’s carriage.

The collection was interesting, particularly the autographs, and there were several other things, which Helen would have liked to see more closely, but many persons were round the table, and Mr. Fielding was occupied with her sister, who was talking with much animation. She had put Miss Fielding into the only vacant nook there was, and contented herself with looking over her shoulder. Suddenly Mr. Fielding looked round and came towards her. ‘You can see nothing there; do come forward; you will like to look at this series of autographs—there are the signatures of all the Girondists.’

‘Who were the Girondists, papa?’ said Miss Fielding.

Mr. Fielding was just then speaking to Mrs. Mordaunt, and did not hear his daughter’s question.

Helen gave a short explanation to her young neighbour, and pointed out one or two of the principal signatures. Miss Fielding thanked her with something of the air of a superior. She had taken up the idea from Helen’s quiet style of dress and

retiring manners, that she must be Miss Slater, Mrs. Mordaunt's governess.

'Now then, Helen,' said Mrs. Mordaunt, 'are you ready—these things are very interesting, but I cannot spare more time. Mr. Fielding, I will set you down.'

'How beautiful that illuminated missal was,' said Helen, when they had returned to the carriage. 'I should have liked to examine it more thoroughly.'

'I have one almost as beautiful,' said Mr. Fielding, 'which I brought from Spain. You shall take it home with you, if you can stop a few minutes at my house. Mrs. Mordaunt, you will come in? I want to ask your advice where to hang that picture I bought the other day, when you were with me.'

They went in accordingly, and found Celia and Clara, Mr. Fielding's two younger girls, with Mrs. Russell, the lady who had the charge of them.

After the introductions had taken place, Mr. Fielding went into an adjoining room to fetch the missal.

'Are these your drawings?' said Mrs. Mordaunt, examining some that lay on the table.

'No, they are Mrs. Russell's,' said Miss Fielding, the person addressed.

'Have you any of your own that you can show me?' said Mrs. Mordaunt, again. 'I should like to see what progress you are making.'

'I never show my drawings,' said the young lady with a decided air.

'My dear!' said Mrs. Russell, in a deprecating tone.

The pupil took no notice, but turned to Helen, and 'What style do you draw in?' She was about to say teach, but she restrained herself.

'I do not draw much in any style; I sometimes amuse myself by making little pen and ink sketches to illustrate books.'

'Oh! some of those are very clever! I wish you would show me yours!'

'I will—if I have any with me. But I will make you some when you come to our house, if you like.'

'Oh, thank you! Will you put them in my album? I have some already in it which were done for me by papa. I will fetch it,' and away she ran with an alacrity very unlike the stateliness of manner she had previously adopted.

When she returned Mr. Fielding was in the room, and they were discussing the placing of the picture.

'I don't think that a good picture at all; do you?' said Miss Fielding to Helen.

'Do you consider yourself a judge?' said Mrs. Mordaunt, with an expression of surprise and displeasure at her forwardness.

'I have seen a great many good pictures,' replied the young lady, quite coolly.

'Georgiana!' said Mr. Fielding, 'your opinion was not asked. I did not buy the picture for its merits, but because it is a view of the country near our house at Malaga.'

'Have you ever been in Spain or Portugal?' said Georgiana to Helen.

‘I have never been on the Continent at all,’ replied Helen.

‘Never been abroad! Dear, how strange! I thought governesses generally—are you not longing to go?—I should be in a continual fret if I thought I should not see every thing that others have seen.’

‘I should like much to see the places which are associated with remarkable events and persons. I almost doubt,’ she said, turning to Mr. Fielding, ‘whether one ever does understand history till one has seen at least *some* of the theatres of action. What an advantage you will have,’ speaking to Georgiana, ‘in reading of the conquests of the Moors, and the wars under Ferdinand and Isabella. The Peninsular War, too, for you have been in the scenes of Wellington’s campaigns, no doubt?’

Mrs. Mordaunt was now ready to go, and they departed, Helen taking with her the missal. She would have taken with her Georgiana’s album also, but for reasons of her own she did not.

‘What a disagreeable girl that Georgiana Fielding is,’ said Mrs. Mordaunt, when they were seated in the carriage. ‘I do not envy any one who has the bringing her up. That poor Mrs. Russell evidently has no authority over her.’

‘It is an awkward age—a sort of transition period,’ observed Helen, ‘and wants a wise mother’s guidance.’

‘Well, I am thankful my eldest is a boy. It will be some time before Julia is old enough to be

troublesome; and depend upon it I shall keep her a child as long as I can.'

'I think there is as much danger,' said Helen, 'quite as much, in attempting to protract childhood beyond its natural limits, as there is in cutting it short too soon. Girls, when their minds advance, and they are capable of reflecting upon themselves and observing others, know they are *not* children, and to treat them as such, excites a feeling of wrong and injustice which destroys their confidence. No good can ever come in attempting to obstruct the appointments of Providence.'

'Who was that with Mrs. Mordaunt?' said Georgiana Fielding, on her part, to her father.

'Her sister, Miss Tyrrel.'

'Dear me! I thought she must be the governess, Mrs. Mordaunt paid her so little attention.'

'But ought people to treat others with slight, because they are doing something useful? I hope you do not think so.'

'No—I do not—but I should think people like Mrs. Mordaunt would.'

'Do not you like Mrs. Mordaunt?'

'Oh! no; she always puts on such an air of superiority, and treats me just as if she thought she had a right to patronize me. I like the sister much better.'

'Miss Tyrrel is a superior woman, and used to be with superior people, so that she has learned to respect others and respect herself.'

CHAPTER XVII.

SYMPTOMS OF CHANGE

To have an offer made is, at first sight, a reason for accepting it. It is not right in a woman to throw away a man's love, and make him unhappy, if she feels she can return it as he wishes. So child, if ever you have an offer, and it's a good and right one, and such as you like, and your conscience approves, say 'Yes,' and be happy; but if there are things against it, or you can't take to it kindly, say 'No,' and be thankful.—*The Experience of Life*.

THERE were other things in London besides pictures and autographs which Helen much wished to take this opportunity of seeing. She sounded her brother-in-law on the subject of the institutions then rising up for the social improvement of the working classes.

'You had better ask Fielding about those sort of things,' said Mr. Mordaunt; 'they are more in his way than in mine; at least,' he added, with a kind of consciousness that things of that kind *ought* to be in the way of a clergyman, 'at least I think them very good things, and always promote them, but Fielding has taken them up more thoroughly.'

'Fielding,' he said to him, the next time his friend called, 'here's Helen sadly wants to see some

of your Model lodging-houses, Ragged-schools, and places of that kind.'

'Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to show Miss Tyrrel anything in that way she would like to inspect;' and appointments were made accordingly, not without some little obstruction on the part of Mrs. Mordaunt, who considered it only a new whim of her sister's which had taken the place of missionary meetings and popular preachers. Mr. Mordaunt and Mr. Fielding, however, bore down her opposition, and two or three mornings were spent in visits—which to Helen were most interesting. Her conceptions of the vast work yet to be done grew with her acquaintance with what had already been attempted.

'How plainly it appears,' said Helen, when, Mr. Fielding having dined quietly with the Mordaunts, they were talking over in the evening the sights which had engaged them in the morning—'how clearly I perceive that the great cause of human misery is selfishness. Most of those poor children whose histories we heard to-day at the Ragged-School, were driven into the streets by the selfishness and cruelty of parents, or step-parents, or employers;—then look at poor needle-women — female apprentices — female servants, over-worked, ruined in health, like those we saw in the Consumption Hospital'—

'Ay, and worse than that,' said Mr. Fielding.

'Then the tyranny and oppression of those who more immediately employ the poor, is often caused,

in part at least, by the selfishness and hard-heartedness of a class above them—link by link it brings in every order of society. What a mighty change it would make if every one acted out those words ‘Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.’

‘Ah! it would, indeed,’ said Mr. Fielding. ‘I confess it often appals me to reflect how long Christianity, the great regenerator of man, has had possession of the field, in this land at least, and yet to find how small has been its influence on the great mass of human corruption.’

‘Oh! but *has* it had possession of the field in real truth?’ said Helen. ‘Has not its regenerating power been stifled under heaps of rubbish? Not to speak of the barbarism of the middle ages, and the priestly tyranny of the Papal despotism, think for how long after the Reformation in our own country the Church was made only an engine of profit, a cure of souls considered a mere provision. Who cared about it as a deliverer from evil? Even when earnest men began to awaken to its true character, they were frowned upon and put down as long as it was possible.’

‘Ah! that’s a fling at our old ‘High and Dry’ orthodoxy, I suppose, Helen,’ said Mr. Mordaunt, joining in the conversation. ‘But I’ll tell you what, I do not see that your friends the Evangelicals have done much more good. They have made a great fuss about Missions to the Heathen, but they have taken very little notice of the heathen at home.’

'It was natural,' replied Helen, 'that feeling as they did about the hopelessness of their condition, the magnitude of this evil should a little hide from their view the misery of those who are at least within physical reach of the means of grace; but I think you should not forget, that to men of evangelical views we owe the London City Mission, the Pastoral Aid Society, and many others.'

'Very true,' said Mr. Fielding. 'You must remember too, that no one had an idea till very lately, what masses of heathen there were in our own cities. Now that it has come to light, I think what you call the Evangelicals are zealously striving to reach them, and the clergy are beginning to see, too, how necessary it is to humanize the habits if you would convert the soul.'

'I cannot help wishing,' said Helen, 'that the instruction in sermons and tracts, and so forth, was a little more directly aimed at the heart of the evil, as it really exists. Dr. Randolph often says that it is not enough seen that religion is perfected goodness, and that a great social injustice is a greater proof of the absence of true godliness than slackness in outward observances.'

'Yes, that's just how it is,' said Mr. Mordaunt, 'and nothing disgusts me more than to hear, as I have done, some of your religious people lamenting over what they call the sins of their hearts, and all the while not the least troubled about the ill-nature, meanness, and tyranny that every one sees in their lives. That comes of crying down the sermons of our old orthodox men as mere moral essays. But

what beautiful precepts on moral duty you may find in Blair's Sermons, and other books which are quite driven out of the field now.'

'Ah! but,' said Helen, 'that class of teachers were defective, in that the instruction was not based on the great truths of the gospel, and the standards of virtue were of a low kind; utility made more prominent than right.'

'But I do not think,' rejoined Mr. Mordaunt, 'preachers who back every exhortation with threats of hell or promises of heaven depart very much from the ground of utility, only they attach these sanctions not so much to conduct as to states of feeling.'

'What it appears to me that we want,' said Helen, 'are men who have a deep sense of God's love to all mankind, and of his intense abhorrence of all evil; who will look abroad into the world and see what are the forms that evil really takes, and then set themselves—in dependence upon God and believing that it is His will—to pursue it into all its hiding-places, and overcome it by the might of love.'

'Yes; that is what we want, indeed,' said Mr. Fielding. 'All outward improvements die away of themselves if not fed by a fire within. And you can't elevate man by merely railing at him or lecturing him. But one is tempted to ask, shall these things ever be?'

'They *will* be,' said Helen, her cheek kindling; 'for it is God's will to deliver us from all evil, and He is stronger than sin or Satan.'

'Dear me,' said Mrs. Mordaunt, who had been

out of the room during this conversation, but now came up to them, 'what is it you are so energetic about, Helen?'

'We have been talking about the way of making the world better,' said Mr. Fielding, 'and we find it can only be by getting rid first of all our own selfishness.'

'Well, I wonder, for my part, that you, Helen, who seem so much interested in these things, do not become a Sister of Charity, or something of that sort, as is all the fashion now. You are just the person for it, an unmarried woman with nothing to do.'

'I will,' said Helen, 'when I am satisfied that I have nothing to do at home.'

'Miss Tyrrel,' said Mr. Fielding, 'acts upon the wise principle of sweeping before one's own door first. If every one would look after their own work-people, servants, dependents, or poor neighbours, and take care that they shall, as far as it depends on them, have everything necessary to their welfare as men and brethren, how much fewer societies we should need!'

'Well, I should think no one could be better spared at home than Helen. Where there are three grown up unmarried daughters, one could hardly be missed.'

'There are some persons,' said Mr. Fielding, 'whose worth is so unobtrusive, that they have scarcely been felt to be necessary, till on their removal the system of which they are the centre falls to pieces.'

'I have been wishing to ask you,' said Mr. Field

ing to Helen, when her sister had turned away, 'what you think of the Sabbath question. I dare say you can tell me, too, what Randolph thinks of it.'

'I believe,' said Helen, 'he would apply to it the words of St. Paul: 'Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath, which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.' He would say, I mean, that the keeping of any one holy day is not now of express obligation, but is left to the wisdom of the Christian Church.'

'I see,' said Mr. Fielding; 'yes, that is the true way of viewing the question.'

'Dr. Randolph was saying one day,' added Helen, 'that minute positive laws as to outward habits, are foreign to the spirit of the Gospel, which seeks to animate the outer life by the spirit of the inner, not to mould the inner from the outer.'

'Just so,' said Mr. Fielding; 'I am myself convinced that it is a mistake to bind the form of the Jewish Sabbath upon the Christian church.'

'At the same time,' said Helen, 'I know that Dr. Randolph is fully convinced that the *spirit* of that institution is still of importance.'

'So I think,' said Mr. Fielding, 'and I believe we are not at all in circumstances to dispense with a weekly rest, a day in which man shall be free from the slavery of perpetual toil, and permitted to spend his time in the cultivation of his spiritual and immortal nature. Whether that must of ne-

cessity be done by the occupation of the whole day, in such employments as are now deemed the only suitable ones, admits I think of a doubt, and especially where such employments compel confinement to the close atmosphere of a crowded city.'

'It is very clear,' said Helen, 'that social worship, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, were considered by the apostles essential to the life of the Christian.'

'Yes,' said Mr. Fielding; 'and that was evidently the original idea of the Christian Lord's-day. The great difficulty in the matter seems to me to be this, that if one makes up one's mind that it is both allowable and desirable, that the working classes should spend a portion of the day in innocent and healthful recreation, yet in obtaining this for some, the rest of others, as railway servants, omnibus drivers, &c., is sacrificed.'

'Yes,' said Helen, 'that is a great difficulty.'

'The only way to meet it,' said Mr. Fielding, 'seems to me to be, first to employ a double set of men, so that each set should at least have every other Sunday to themselves; and secondly, to have a regular weekly service for those especially, who on the preceding Sunday have been prevented attending public worship—the service and their occupations being so arranged, that they shall have time to attend. Then there is another practice which I should like to see common, and which exists in a large manufactory, over which I have some influence, and to which I want to introduce you before you leave town. I mean the practice of

assembling all the people employed for a very short service, every morning before the day's work begins.* If masters and managers would only in a serious and earnest spirit adopt such a practice as this, read a passage of Scripture, and repeat a few collects, or other of the church prayers, I believe it would be one of the best means of carrying out the church's finely conceived law of daily service. This would be a step towards making every day, and not the Sunday only, holy to the Lord; what St. Paul I suppose meant when he said 'another esteemeth every day.' But it wants to be done from the heart, and not as a mere form.'

'Do you know,' said Mr. Mordaunt to his wife, when they were alone together, 'it would not at all surprise me if Fielding were to take a liking to your sister; indeed, I think he does like her as it is.'

'How can you be so absurd, Charles,' replied Mrs. Mordaunt; 'Mr. Fielding has too much sense to be taken with a woman, just because she gets up a little enthusiasm for his favourite hobbies. Now I do beg you will not be putting any such nonsense into Helen's head.'

'Why, my dear, it *wants* no putting in, if, as you intimate, she is only pretending a philanthropic taste to please him.'

'Oh! I don't mean that exactly, but I know Helen better than you do, and I know very well

* See the interesting statement of Mr. Wilson in the Report of Price's Candle Manufactory.

that she is always in a high state of admiration about some new thing or other. She may appear very good and very sensible, and all that, but vanity is her weak point, and is at the bottom of a great many of her pursuits.'

'Trust a woman for finding out another's weak point. But, however, you would surely be glad to have your sister well married.'

'Oh! of course I should, but I have a great regard for Mr. Fielding, and I should be very sorry for him to make a foolish match.'

'Well, but I am not at all convinced it would be a foolish match.'

'I am *sure* it would, and really as to Helen, she might think it a fine thing at her age, to be married at all, but it is no light thing to be step-mother to three girls. *That's* a situation which requires a person, with more—more knowledge of the world than Helen can be supposed to have had any means of gaining.'

'Well, we shall see,' said Charles.

Strange though it might have seemed to a superficial observer, Mrs. Mordaunt was really much annoyed at the idea of her sister marrying into a position which would at once raise her into an equality with herself. She had so long been accustomed to look upon her as a rightful object of patronage, that she could not at all reconcile her mind to such a change in their relative situations. Mr. Fielding was also a favourite of her own, a convenient friend whom she was proud of, as a man of sense, wealth, and influence, and she did not at all

like the idea of his being rendered useless to her by marriage. She comforted herself, however, with thinking that Helen's visit would soon be over, and it would be very unlikely that Mr. Fielding, if he had been at all pleased with her (which she was still most unwilling to admit), would bestow a moment's thought upon her when she was away from the house.

Not, however, to trust entirely to this remedy, she took great pains by the manner she talked to her sister, at her and of her, to give Mr. Fielding the impression that Helen was a fickle, restless person, very ardent in taking up new ideas, especially in religion, pushing them to absurd extremes, and laying them down after a time to take up perhaps with something the very opposite.

Mr. Fielding saw plainly through Mrs. Mordaunt's motives, and paid little attention to her suggestions; still, a few good-humoured pleasantries from Mr. Mordaunt, whom he thought much better of than of his wife, pleasantries such as 'oh, I forgot, you don't go to Missionary meetings every day now, &c. &c. That was when you were wild about Seymour,' &c., rather jarred on his nerves.

During the ensuing week, Helen's time was a good deal engrossed by the law business which had brought her to town, and as soon as it was settled, Mrs. Mordaunt made it quite apparent to her sister that she expected her visit to terminate also.

Helen was not backward to perceive that her further stay would be unwelcome, and with something more of sadness than usual, for her visit had

been unusually interesting, she began to arrange for her departure.

The evening before this was to take place, she was left alone ; Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt were gone to a concert, to which she was to have accompanied them, but, tired with packing and other preparations, when the time had come, she had begged them to leave her at home.

She was tearing up some old letters and notes, and thinking with regret that she should not see Mr. Fielding again, since he had left town the day before her departure was fixed, and had not yet returned, when a ring at the bell made her start, and the next minute the door was opened, and Mr. Fielding himself appeared.

After the first greetings were over, (it seemed he had expected to find Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt at home, but when told they were out, still determined to come in for a few minutes,) Helen said, 'I am not sorry to have this opportunity of bidding you good bye, for I am going back to Milnwood to-morrow.'

'To-morrow ! why, how is that ? the Randolphs did not know of it.'

'The Randolphs ! have you seen them ?'

'Yes, I came from their house this afternoon. I accidentally met Dr. Randolph in the train, and he persuaded me to go home with him. Otherwise I should have been in town yesterday.'

'And they did not know I was coming back ? But I dare say not. Mamma would only get my letter yesterday afternoon, and if it was as wet

there as it was here, they would not perhaps see the Grange family.'

'And you really *are* going to-morrow?'

'Yes, unless I hear anything to the contrary by the morning's post, which is not likely.'

'You have fixed your departure very abruptly.'

'My business was finished sooner than I expected.'

'But you should now stay for pleasure.'

'Well, I have had a good deal of that. My sister is herself going out of town, and I thought I had better go home at once.'

There was a short silence, and then it was Mr. Fielding who spoke;—and Helen heard words such as she had never heard before,—such as she never expected to hear. He spoke of deep admiration, of love. She listened with wonder and delight, but withal with fear and trembling—could she dare to give ear to such words from such a man; was it not too late? No! for she could respond to them—youth hath fled, but feeling was still fresh and young.

It was settled between them, that nothing should be said to Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt till after Helen's return to Milnwood. Her spirits were hurried enough to make her dread an explanation with her sister; and as soon as Mr. Fielding was gone, Helen went to bed to avoid all inquiries.

Mrs. Mordaunt was rather surprised, and not over pleased, when she found, next morning, that Mr. Fielding had been there in her absence. When she heard, however, that he had been to Milnwood, she thought it probable he might have had some

messages for her sister, and that explained the matter.

Helen left in the afternoon. Mr. Fielding waylaid her at the station and put her into the train, a little to the surprise of Mr. Mordaunt's man servant, who, coupling with it the visit of the preceding evening, considered it rather a significant circumstance.

When Helen reached the Hanbury station, she found that there was no carriage waiting for her, and as none arrived after a quarter of an hour's delay, she determined, the evening being fine, to walk.

Often had she crossed those fields at different periods of her life. Through them had lain her path from St. Mark's church to Milnwood; and well she remembered with what a weary step and what a heavy heart she had returned on many an afternoon after the Sunday services—or after some disappointing interview with Mr. Seymour. Through them she had passed when in the old coach days she had sometimes, on returning from some London visit, preferred to be set down at the bottom of the hill, and to walk, as now, by the field-path to Milnwood; and how often had she then sighed to think how little her presence was cared for in the home to which she was going. Through those fields she had walked from her aunt's house after their return from Broadstairs, and with what a lightened heart—with what cheering hopes for the future! Those hopes, she acknowledged with thankfulness, had been more

than realized, and now another phase of life seemed turning towards her.

It has been said, that even where the affections are engaged, the reaction of feelings and spirits too tightly strung, gives rise, after acceptance, to an unaccountable longing to retreat. Helen felt nothing of this. Her regard for Mr. Fielding was too unselfish. She thought not of herself,—if she could only requite his affection—if she could only make him happy, that was all she thought of; and she had a certain unconscious trust in the sincerity of her own devotion. Yet she felt somewhat depressed. She had been thinking of the other elements of the case—of the relation of a step-mother—its difficulties—her own inexperience and possible unfitness. Might she not have been too hasty, too inconsiderate in her consent? It was a comfort to her to think of the Randolphs as counsellors; and as she passed the gate of the Grange, she almost longed to go in there first. But that was not to be thought of.

When she reached her own home, she found that her letter had been misunderstood,—that by some mistake it had not reached them till a day after it should have done; and as she had mentioned the 'day after to-morrow' as that of her return, she had not been expected till the next day. This blunder did not increase the warmth of Mrs. Tyrrel's reception. The return of her daughters after an absence of any length was always rather a trial to her nerves, and to come before they were expected was a considerable

aggravation of the evil. Helen saw this feeling in her manner, and felt it in her cold kiss, and it did not very much raise her spirits. Her sisters were gone out to dinner; and after rather a *sober* evening, Helen went weary and sad to her chamber.

The next morning brought brighter thoughts to herself and pleasanter words from others. At breakfast many questions were asked, especially by Emma and Harriet, about her London visit, what she had been doing, whom she had seen, what Julia's new house was like, &c.

'Well, I do think,' exclaimed Emma, at last, 'that Julia, now she has plenty of room, might have asked Harriet and me up this spring for some part of the season.'

'I often wish,' remarked Harriet, 'that you, Helen, had been our married sister instead of Julia. I don't think you would have overlooked us so completely.'

'Thank you for your good opinion,' said Helen; 'if ever I should be in such circumstances, I will endeavour to deserve it.'

'I am afraid, Helen,' said Mrs. Tyrrel, 'that the poor girls' enjoyments will not be great if they depend on *your* settling in life. They are more likely now to be placed in circumstances to help you.'

Helen felt rather curiously, but she said nothing; and as soon as she could get away quietly she went down to the Grange.

She found the Randolphs not quite unprepared for what she had to communicate. There had been

something in Mr. Fielding's manner, and in the way in which he had contrived to keep the conversation on Helen, and to elicit particulars about her early life and opinions (in fact, with the view of correcting Mrs. Mordaunt's insinuations) which had aroused their suspicions.

'This is a very pretty thing of you, Miss Helen,' said Agnes, when they were alone together; 'this is the end of your devotion to a single life, and the great things you were to do for Humanity as an unmarried woman.'

'Well, dear Agnes,' said Helen, blushing, 'you know I always used to say I should never wish to change my condition unless I came in contact with one from whom to be severed would be a heavy trial. And now this has come to pass,—so what ought I to do?'

'What you are going to do, my dear. You will not cease to be a worker when you are married.'

'I trust not. And don't you think, Agnes, that strong contrast which St. Paul draws between the unmarried woman who cares for the things of the Lord, and the married who careth for the things of the world how she may please her husband—do not you think, I say, that the force of this contrast is almost destroyed when the object of both is to please the Lord?'

'Yes, certainly, in that case I think the married woman has far greater opportunities of serving the Lord than the single, inasmuch as she has greater personal influence.'

'A great many religious persons,' rejoined Helen,

'would no doubt warn me of the danger of having the heart engrossed in human affections, and so drawn away from God.'

'Oh, dear,' said Agnes, 'I am sure papa would say—I have often heard him say—'That it is a mistake to suppose we shall love God more by checking our love for what is good and great in our fellow-creatures.''

'So I think,' said Helen; 'it seems to me that one might rather find it a means of drawing closer to Him who is the perfect pattern and centre of everything really true and beautiful. It is curious,' she added, after a while, 'that I should have found the person who suited me in a *widower*. I always had rather a dislike to second marriages.'

'It is a pity, I think, to have a fixed standard in a matter which so varies according to circumstances. Sometimes they are reprehensible—sometimes most necessary and justifiable. In the present case, for instance, who can blame Mr. Fielding for making an attempt to have that domestic happiness of which he was disappointed in his first marriage?'

'Do you know much about that, Agnes?'

'Yes; we have lately fallen in with a friend who knew Mrs. Fielding very well, both before and after her marriage. She was a Miss Mostyn, very pretty, but much inferior in mind to him, and of a jealous, exacting temper, passionately fond of show and admiration, and pining after it even when her health made it impossible for her to enjoy it. He was a most kind and attentive husband; but all who knew them saw that he was not happy. She

could not bear any of his chosen friends; and that, no doubt, was the reason why papa saw so little of him after he was married. It is very sad to think what power women have to blight a man's happiness simply by want of sympathy, without, perhaps, any malice prepense.'

'But what a blessing it is,' said Helen, her cheek kindling, 'to think of the power they have also of promoting happiness. May I only be to Mr. Fielding all that he deserves I should be.'

'I have no fear of you, my dear Helen. I think he is tolerably secure—if God will—of leading 'harmonious days.'

'There is one point, I confess,' said Helen, 'about which I feel anxious. I shall not be only a wife—I shall be a stepmother, and that is such a difficult and delicate position.'

'I should like you to talk to mamma about that—she had a stepmother herself, and knows a great deal by experience of the relation.'

Mrs. Randolph came in soon after, and Agnes began.

'Mamma, I want you just to give Helen a few of the results of your wisdom as to the relation of a stepmother. She is rather frightening herself lest she should find herself involved in difficulties beyond her powers to manage, though I think that if there is a creature on earth fitted to be a good step-mother, she is that person.'

'Oh, Agnes!' exclaimed Helen, 'don't begin to flatter me.'

'Well, my dear,' said Mrs. Randolph, 'it is no

flattery to say, that in my belief, you have many of the requisite qualities, but it is well to distrust oneself. There is no doubt it is a relation which has peculiar difficulties. There is unlimited, and to a great extent, irresponsible authority without corresponding sympathy. Cases, of course, are very different. When children are young, it is a comparatively easy matter; it is the stepmother's fault if she does not make them love her like a parent. Or when they are quite grown up, there is a probability of their not remaining long at home. But the greatest difficulty, perhaps, is where the young people are partly grown up—just coming forward into life. If they are girls they have most likely acquired, in the interval after the mother's death, a certain degree of independence and authority in the family, and have received a measure of the father's attention greater than they would have had if their mother had been living, and they feel it painful and somewhat mortifying to take a lower position, even though it be their natural one. The best way to meet this is, I should say, generally, to remove them from home for a time where it can be done pleasantly to themselves, so that things may fall easily into their natural state. But if this cannot be done without making them uncomfortable, their privileges should be abridged *very* gently, and as little as possible; and the stepmother should try to make them sensible by her kindness, by making them as much as possible her companions—that they have gained as much as they have lost by their father's mar-

riage. Nothing is so much to be avoided as any appearance of putting them into the back ground, slighting them, treating them like children, and so on. I am sure we can all recollect how we used to resent that.'

'Oh, yes,' said Helen.

'I never had it to resent,' said Agnes.

'Then, my dear, I am afraid you would make a bad stepmother, for it is knowing the heart of a girl—keenly recollecting one's own feelings—which best teaches one to be tender in dealing with the feelings of others. Weak persons, to whom the exercise of authority is something new, are very fond of showing it on all occasions; and this is one reason among others why very young stepmothers are generally oppressive. They are apt to leave the poor young people no independence of action—to be ordering and directing every little trifle by way of making themselves respected.'

'Oh, yes,' said Helen, 'how very true that is.'

'Another source of misery,' resumed Mrs. Randolph, 'is a certain degree of jealousy of the affections of the father. And here, again, it is mostly young women who marry widowers that are the greatest offenders. They conceive themselves entitled to a vast deal of attention from their husbands—they never think that, if they have chosen to marry men who have already claims on their hearts, they must be content with something less than entire forgetfulness of every other creature; and they really behave as if the poor children ought to be perfect nonentities. Or a more dis-

agreeable variety of this kind of egotism shows itself when the wife makes a parade of her influence on her husband, and doles out indulgences to the children as *her* gift. 'I asked your papa to take you.' 'I told your papa he really ought to think of you sometimes.' 'I positively would not accept such a thing unless your papa gave you one too,' &c.'

'How very odious,' said Agnes, 'making the poor things fancy that they are no longer anything at all to their only remaining parent.'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Randolph; 'and it is worse still when the father, perhaps well-intentioned but ill-judging, plays into the same hand,—says, 'Your mother interceded for you,' and 'you owe that to your mother,' &c. I remember well the heart-burning which I experienced when this was said to me. And this reminds me of another thing which I much object to—the enforcing upon step-children, except when very young, the epithet of 'mother.' It almost always grates on the feelings of those who remember an own mother.'

'It must, indeed,' said Agnes, 'where there is a very tender remembrance of her. But what would you have them call the stepmother?'

'Anything better,' said Mrs. Randolph, 'than the hypocrisy of 'mamma' and 'mother,' where the heart silently protests against it. In short, my dear, if I were placed in that position, I should try to behave as much as possible as if I were a friend or relative entrusted with the care of the young people, never using authority, except when abso-

lutely necessary,—never interfering with any of their little arrangements, tastes, or pursuits, not even to improve them, unless I felt I should carry at least their reason with me, giving them as much liberty as I possibly could without positively injuring them,—never coming between them and their father, but seeking to gain my own place in their affections by really loving them and truly seeking their happiness.’

‘Oh, my dear mother,’ said Agnes, kissing her, ‘what a delightful stepmother you would have made.’

‘Yes,’ said Helen, ‘better than many own mothers; but, in fact, those that fulfil most perfectly one relation are likely to excel in others also. But the more I think of the relation of stepmother, the more I see that it does require eminent qualities in an eminent degree.’

‘It requires, my dear, Christian charity. She who suffereth long and is kind—she who envieth not—she who vaunteth not herself, is not puffed up, who doth not behave herself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil—she who beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things—she will be a really good step-mother, and no one else. And if so many women, professedly religious, fail in it as much as the more worldly, it only shows, as my dear husband often says, what a vast quantity of religion there is now-a-days which has nothing to do with Christian charity. But now, my dear, don’t let me discourage you from undertaking

what I verily believe is appointed for you. I am sure Dr. Randolph would, if he were here, remind you that in every situation we have to maintain a struggle against selfishness; and what more is a stepmother's life? The same grace that is sufficient for you in one situation will be sufficient in another.'

'I have so feared,' said Helen, 'that my inclinations—my interest in Mr. Fielding might warp my judgment, and make me overlook other considerations.'

'That very interest—the mutual affection which seems to have sprung up between you and Mr. Fielding is to my mind, a strong indication that you are intended for this service; and it cannot be doubted that it is one of great importance. You know how it is said, 'he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve;' and I know you will delight to serve these dear children, both for their own and their father's sake.'

The next morning brought a letter from Mr. Fielding to Helen, announcing that he had written to Dr. Randolph, and should be at the Grange that evening.

'Who is your letter from?' said Mrs. Tyrrel to Helen. 'It is a handwriting I don't know.'

'Why, mamma,' said Helen, with a tremulousness of voice which made Mr. Tyrrel look up from his newspaper, 'you were saying something the other day about the improbability of my ever having it in my power to invite my sisters to a

home of my own. I hope it will not be displeasing to you to hear that that is not quite an impossibility.'

'Goodness, child! what do you mean? what new plan have you got in your head?'

'No plan of mine, mamma, but when I was in London I had an offer of marriage—a friend of my brother-in law's.'

'An offer of marriage!' exclaimed Mrs. Tyrrel.

'What's this,' said Mr. Tyrrel. 'Helen, child, I hope you are not going to throw yourself away upon some old man, or some poor parson with a heap of children. Recollect it is better to be an old maid than to marry badly.'

'So I have always felt, dear father,' said Helen, 'but Mr. Fielding is in every respect far beyond my deservings.'

'What! is it Fielding the great German merchant?' asked Mr. Tyrrel.

'Yes; he is an intimate friend of Mr. Mor-daunt's, and also of Dr. Randolph's.'

'Well, if he is the man, you have done pretty well as to this world's goods. You accepted him, I suppose?'

'I did, papa; but not for the sake of his wealth. That is the least of his merits. He will be at the Grange this evening, and will ask your consent to-morrow.'

'He is pretty sure of that,' said Mr. Tyrrel, laughing, 'as he has had yours. Not that I would let you go, my girl, to any one who was not worthy of you, but I can trust your judgment for that.'

'Is Mr. Fielding a widower?' asked Mrs. Tyrrel,

who had hardly recovered from her surprise, and began to suspect that there must be some dark side to the picture.

‘What age?’

‘I don’t know, mamma; I should judge rather above forty.’

‘Are there children?’

‘Three—girls,—the eldest about fifteen.’

‘Well, it all sounds very fair—we shall see. Charles and Julia seem to have done something for you at last. What do they say about it?’

‘They do not know of it at present. I wished that it should be first mentioned to you.’

That evening about seven o’clock (the Tyrrels always dined at five), Emma and Harriet were sauntering down the garden walk, where a box-hedge bordered the road, and at a corner, where the hedge was lower than in other parts, they saw the Randolphs’ poney carriage draw up to the gates. A gentleman was sitting by the side of the servant.

‘Look, look, Emma!’ cried Harriet, ‘that must be Mr. Fielding. And there is Helen, I declare, just crossing the road. There, they have met.’

Mr. Fielding perceiving Helen, who was going to the Grange, where she was to dine, got out of the carriage, and after standing to exchange a few words, they went through the opened gates together.

‘What a fine looking man!’ said Emma; ‘quite an air of *distinction*!’

‘And did you see,’ said Harriet, ‘how Helen

looked up in his face when she took his arm? Why she is quite in love, I declare.'

'Better late than never,' said Emma; 'I don't think she ever saw a man before that she could bear to think of.'

'Well,' said Harriet; 'she is a dear good creature, worth twenty such as we are, and happy is the man that gets her.'

'It was here I first saw you,' said Mr. Fielding to Helen, when they were sitting alone in the oriel window of the library that evening. 'I had no presentiment then of what you were one day to be to me. But I long remembered the conversation I had with Randolph afterwards, about women, their influence on men, &c. When I became a widower, I made a firm resolve never to marry again, unless I could meet with something like a Roman character, such as Niebuhr describes his Milly,* only a Roman baptized into the Christian spirit. It is a sad thing to have all one's highest and best aspirations quenched at one's own fireside. And yet I believe that is very often the case. I was reading the other day a remark to the effect that marriage generally fixes a man down to an average

* Milly has a Roman character, and this was always my ideal of a citizen's wife; pride, (self-respect?) intellect, the most retiring modesty, constancy, and gentleness. In history we only meet with such women among the Roman matrons, the Calpurnias, Portias, Arrias; soft, weak, tender girlishness would neither have elevated nor strengthened my character.—NIEBUHR'S *Life and Letters*, Vol. I.

mediocrity,* that we cease to expect any thing very good or great from him.'

'And yet,' said Helen, 'women are generally the promoters of religious habits.'

'Yes, very true; but they are such as fall in with the prevalent tone of the times. If a man is very earnest in pursuit of truths, or very energetic in the cause of benevolence, and strikes out anything of a new path, his wife is generally afraid he is going too far.'

'If that is the case, women must have sadly degenerated; for in the early Christian times, women were foremost in braving every danger for the sake of truth.'

'Yes, but'—smiling—'a little earlier there were devout and honourable women who thought St. Paul went too far, and joined the persecution against him.'

'It is, I suppose,' said Helen, 'the consequence of narrow education, and habits of ease engendering timidity.'

'Yes,—and we have ourselves partly to thank for it. We have done our best to make women the slaves of conventionality, and we cannot wonder if they remain so when it would be convenient to us if they could rise above it.'

'Well,' said Helen, 'if ever the cause of truth and human happiness should be in question, I hope I may be to you what Schiller's Gertrude Stauffacher was to her husband.'

* *Westminster Review.*

‘Ah, yes,’ said Mr. Fielding, drawing her towards him; ‘he who is cheered onwards by a wise and loving woman, has no excuse for faltering in his appointed work.’

The introduction of Mr. Fielding to Helen’s family was productive of entire satisfaction. Her father and mother were delighted with his fortune and position, and Emma and Harriet with his person, his bearing, and his courteous manner to themselves.

Mrs. Mordaunt, on receiving the intelligence of her sister’s engagement, was greatly, and not very pleasantly, surprised. She concealed her feelings, however, and wrote two eloquent letters of congratulation; one to her mother, the other to Helen.

In the first, she took great credit for her services in advancing the interests of her family, and in the second, she warned her sister that though she never could be sufficiently grateful for such unlooked for good fortune, yet she must expect that her path would not be always on velvet, for that a step-mother was always regarded with ill will; and from the character of Georgiana Fielding, a more than ordinary share of it might be expected.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HELEN'S MARRIED LIFE.

And thou, as one that once declined,
 When he was little more than boy,
 On some unworthy heart with joy,
 But lives to wed an equal mind;
 And breathes a novel world—

In Memoriam.

And so these twain, upon the skirts of time
 Sit side by side, full summed in all their powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the To Be;
 Self-reverent each, and reverencing each,
 Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other even as those who love.

The Princess.

AUGUST days had not quite departed, when the bells of Milnwood Church rang a bridal peal for Helen Tyrrel as merrily as they had ere-while done for her sister. True, it was late in life's reckoning, and the brightness might seem only that of a Martinmas summer, but the fourteen years' experience which had been gained since Julia's marriage, was of priceless value in the reckoning of eternity.

The first three months after the wedding were spent on the continent, where Helen had the delight of seeing, and Mr. Fielding the delight of showing her, scenes and objects which she had

often striven to fancy, but scarcely ever thought of beholding.

During the absence of the married pair, Georgiana and her sisters abode with Mrs. Russell at Paris, where Mr. and Mrs. Fielding took them up on their return.

Before Christmas they were all settled in their London home, and Helen's married life was now to begin in earnest. She and her husband had somewhat fathomed each other's souls in the three months of their tour, and the feeling of each was of wondering thankfulness at their congeniality.

Mr. Fielding had begun life with great aims and sanguine hopes. He was one of those whose hearts throb high with the interests of humanity, and his purpose was formed to throw himself warmly into the cause of advancement. He had deep religious feelings also, though they were not fully developed. For some years he had worked on, using his talents, his money, and his influence for good, and associating with many who were engaged on the same side. But in an evil hour he met the beautiful Georgiana Mostyn, gave her credit for a mind in harmony with her face, married her after a short courtship, and found, too late, that he was linked to a woman of narrow understanding, vain, selfish, and egotistical.

One by one, Mr. Fielding was compelled, by the tyranny of his wife, to drop his former friends, pursuits, and interests, and to take up in their stead a round of heartless dissipation. But this did not last; he had too much sense and strength of character to

be long a woman's slave—a sense of duty and of higher responsibility took hold upon him, and at last he succeeded in rescuing his fortune and his time from the imperious demands made upon them, and in asserting his own supremacy.

But the check thus imposed on his wife's tastes seemed completely to extinguish what little regard she had ever had for him, and henceforth his domestic hours were embittered by cold looks, sharp replies, languor, and fretfulness.

Heavy was the trial to Mr. Fielding. Whilst occupied in business, or in concerting and carrying out plans of benevolence, he was comparatively happy; but then came the hour when he must return to his home, and there he too well knew that no sympathy awaited him, and that unless, as was generally the case, some guest was present, it was well if the evening could be got through without positive displays of ill humour.

In the last months of her illness, and when death was advancing with rapid strides, Mrs. Fielding had awakened to some sense of her faults as a wife, but the full amount of the pain she had inflicted she had not delicacy of mind enough to appreciate.

Hardly was Mr. Fielding conscious how cheerless his former life had been till the misery was brought before him by contrast. Hardly had he felt what a weight had pressed on his soul, dragging it down towards the level of mediocrity. But it would have done any one good, who had known him in former days, to mark his altered demeanour—to see the elastic step and animated countenance with which he now

re-entered his house, where there was one awaiting him to whom the veriest trifle he had to relate was interesting, but whose deepest attention was enchaind by those great social questions into which he had flung himself. And now did he rejoice in the cordial greeting which Helen bestowed on his friends, and the value which he knew they all attached to talking over any new scheme with her who was almost sure to contribute some valuable suggestion. Well did he feel the truth of what has been said, 'that the most powerful love man feels for woman is founded, not on mere beauty, but on internal character,'* and well did he feel also that the most enduring union is formed by joint work for God.

In the second year of her marriage Helen gave birth to a son. With what joy and thankfulness was this treasure received both by father and mother! And yet Helen felt there was need to rejoice with trembling, lest from this little plant should be scattered seeds of dissension and jealousy. Against this she earnestly strove to guard. She repressed all undue exultation or excessive and unseasonable displays of tenderness, and whilst gently commending the baby to the notice and protection of his sisters, she took care never to give them too much of his company.

Helen had plenty of hints and advice volunteered on the subject of her step-daughters, especially the eldest, for Celia and Clara were too

* Newman's *History of the Soul*.

quiet to excite much attention. 'If you do not bring that girl's spirit down you will repent it,' said Mrs. Mordaunt; 'I should soon teach her her proper place.' 'I greatly fear,' lamented another friend, 'that poor Georgiana takes after her mother. I hope you may be able to check her love of dress and amusement.' 'You will find Miss Fielding sadly indifferent to religion,' said a third. 'I hope your admonitions may be blessed to bring her to decided piety.' To all these suggestions Helen made civil replies, but went quietly on her own course.

She carefully and silently studied Georgiana's character. She saw that the great evil of that character was selfishness. Not that full grown monster which is incapable of feeling the force of justice, gratitude, or affection, but that earlier form of it which is often seen in the young,—self importance and egotism. This was in Georgiana peculiarly active, never having been checked by its natural antagonist,—pure and warm affection. To the same cause might be partly referred her insensibility to religious feeling. The disinterested love of any human being has a tendency to open the heart towards God. The love of a good and wise parent especially, is the natural preparation for devotion to a Heavenly Father, and it is strangely short-sighted to represent, as is sometimes done in books, the love of a father or a mother as a species of idolatry calculated to draw the heart from Him. 'If a man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how shall he love God, whom he hath not seen?'

But Georgiana had had but little of this preparation. She had never loved her mother, and during the latter part of her life, when Mr. and Mrs. Fielding were travelling about, she had been frequently separated from them for long periods, so that even her father had been very much a stranger to her till within the last two years, nor had those sufficed to establish any intimate companionship between them.

In Georgiana's own eyes, her dress, her studies, her amusements, her companions, were objects of supreme importance: and combined with this, was an intense desire of equalling, if not of surpassing, every one else in every advantage that could be attained. She felt herself wronged if any young person with whom she came in contact was more accomplished, better informed, handsomer, or better dressed than herself. At the same time there was a warmth and energy in her character, which Helen saw would be valuable when turned into a right direction. Also she was not without a sense of justice, and even of generosity.

To correct a character which had already attained the growth of sixteen years was, Helen felt sure, not the task of a few months. Still more sure was she that it was not to be effected by any of the methods which had been recommended to her. She had no opinion that people could be made truly humble by mortifying them, or self-denying by abridging them of legitimate rights. She was careful always to treat Georgiana with perfect justice, to give her her full importance in the

family as 'Miss Fielding,' and to avoid the injurious practice of petting the younger children and neglecting the elder. She would not indeed allow her, as she was somewhat inclined to do, to domineer over her younger sisters and interfere with Mrs. Russell, but whenever she had to interpose with authority, she always studied to exercise it in the quietest and least irritating manner.

Georgiana had from the first been inclined to like Helen. She expected to find her, from the little she had seen of her in company with Mrs. Mordaunt, an amiable, meek-spirited person who might be easily managed. But she soon discovered that the same unselfishness which made Helen yielding when nothing but her own rights were concerned, made her inflexible when a principle of right was in question. No love of peace, no dislike of giving pain, (feelings which indeed were strong in Helen, and which it often cost her an effort to master,) no selfish motive, in short, would induce her to give up a point which she knew ought to be carried. And Georgiana saw this, and grew to respect Helen, to admire her, and sometimes to wish to be like her. Nor would this have been the case had Helen been merely *good*, but her superiority of mind, her intellectual acquirements, her powers of conversation, the respect she saw paid to her by clever men, all had their influence on Georgiana's mind; and though she rather wished to excel in more brilliant ways, she was not sorry to have a mother-in-law who excelled in this line. When her youth should be over, she did not know

but that she should like to be learned and intellectual herself, but *now*, the most fashionable acquirements were all she cared for.

Helen had at first tried to read with her, history, and other subjects which might train her thinking powers; but she was so much averse to anything which required close attention and was not followed by immediate results, that Helen thought it better not to press the point, and to confine herself to helping her with those things which she was willing to acquire. In addition to the lessons she received from masters, Helen read with her German and other works of taste, hoping to kindle her imagination by contact with high and beautiful ideas, and thus to weaken the power of the base idol—self. With the same view she promoted her seeing the grand and beautiful both in nature and art.

Mrs. Russell, who remained with Celia and Clara as their instructress, was very uneasy about Georgiana's irreligion, and when she and Helen talked over the young people and advised together, as they often did, she was desirous to try the effect of direct appeals to the conscience. But Helen always drew back from this method. She saw how easy it would be to cover all this worship of self with a thin veil of religious doctrine and observance, and she rather preferred by indirect methods, by setting before her high aims, high ideals of character, just conceptions especially of the Divine character, to bring her to feel her need of reconciliation to Him.

A great struggle took place when Georgiana was introduced into society, as to the kind of life she should henceforth lead. She would willingly have plunged into the thickest of dissipation, gone everywhere, and done everything that others did. But upon this point Mr. Fielding was resolute. She should have all the society, all the advantages which she could have without injuring herself or others, but he would not allow his servants to be kept out, night after night, exposed to temptations—the victims of which he was using his influence to reclaim. Neither would he allow his daughter to make company and amusement the business of life.

Celia had always been delicate; and when she attained her fifteenth year (about four years after Helen's marriage), she showed symptoms which rendered it advisable that she should winter in a southern climate. Madeira was selected as the most suitable place, and it was agreed that she should be accompanied by Mrs. Russell, and also by Georgiana and Clara, to both of whom it was thought a sea voyage would be serviceable.

The winter was over, and they were about to return to England, when, in April, Celia became suddenly worse, and died after a week's illness. Georgiana was extremely distressed; and when they were about leaving the island, her sorrow appeared so great that Mrs. Russell could not help taking advantage, of what appeared to her a favourable season, to set before her the uncertainty of life and the danger of putting off religion too long.

Georgiana hastily cut her short, saying, 'It is of

no use, dear Mrs. Russell, talking to me in that manner; you rather do me harm. I never could be religious merely as a safeguard against something hereafter.'

But not long after her return to England, Georgiana sought admittance, one night, to Helen's dressing-room, and flinging herself upon her step-mother's neck, confessed, with tears, that she was miserable—she had long felt that she was going contrary to God and to all goodness. She despised herself. She would give anything to be what she felt in her heart to be right and true, but she did not know how.

Helen clasped her in her arms, and whispered gently, 'I will arise, and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned before Heaven and in Thy sight, make me as one of thy hired servants. Do with me what thou wilt, only take away my sins and keep me with Thee.'

From that time Georgiana was a different person—a new creature. From year to year the example of Helen had gradually raised her standard of character, and caused her to feel a secret contempt for her own inferiority; but lately a more powerful agent had been at work. She had met in Madeira a young clergyman who was attending on a dying friend. He was intellectual, refined, and deeply religious. Georgiana's imagination was captivated, and her heart won, although unsuspected by him. The power of self was broken, and now she was able to look up to the splendour around her and to estimate her own

darkness. She told nothing of this piece of internal history to Helen. She hid all connected with Mr. Sydney in her own heart. She dreaded the natural suspicion that she was wishing to be religious merely to please the man she loved. But it was not so. Had she been sure of never seeing him again, as indeed she had no near hope of doing—had she been sure of his preferring another—and she had not the slightest reason to think that he preferred or ever would prefer her,—her feelings, in respect to religion, would have been the same. She was in love with Mr. Sydney it is true, but she was in love with goodness also—she had seen and recognised in him the reflection of a higher spirit. The key-note had been struck, and henceforth the melody ran on, and her soul mounted up with the desire of conformity to what she admired. And she set to work honestly to attain this conformity, and to root out everything wrong in her daily conduct. Helen's guidance and counsels had prepared her to trust unreservedly in God as a Father, and to feel assured that He was on her side. Even in the uncertainty of her earthly happiness, and not daring to speak to any one of what was deepest in her heart, Georgiana was at peace, and comparatively happy.

About a year after this time, on returning from a drive, Helen and Georgiana found a card with the name of the Rev. Edward Sydney, and a London address. Georgiana looked at it, and hastily left the room. Mr. Sydney's name had been frequently mentioned by Mrs. Russell as a

clergyman who had been very kind to Celia in her illness, but Helen had somehow received the impression that he was a middle-aged man, and had certainly never connected him with Georgiana, who never spoke of him.

Mr. Fielding soon sought Mr. Sydney out. He was grateful to him for the kindness he had shown to Celia, and an intimacy sprung up between them. Mr. Sydney was often at the house. Georgiana's manner towards him was at first cold and constrained; she scarcely opened her lips, and her reserve on anything bordering on a religious subject was so remarkable, that it even attracted the notice of her mother-in-law. Helen attributed it to the dread of expressing more than she felt. The reserve, however, could not last long: Mr. Sydney, who had many recollections in common with her, took pains to overcome it, and by degrees he drew her out. Their conversations became full of animation, and Helen was surprised to find how much more they had known of each other than from Georgiana's silence she had been aware of.

Mr. Sydney, on his part, was surprised at the advance which Georgiana had made. He had been somewhat struck with her in Madeira, and had taken pleasure in her society, regarding her as one who, though as yet undisciplined in mind, had the elements and foreshadowings of much good—little suspecting that the beginnings of religious earnestness had really been communi-

cated, like the electric spark, from himself. He now saw with joy that the humility which he had seen struggling with pride, the earnestness which was overcoming thoughtlessness, the gentleness which had alternated with peremptoriness, were fairly gaining the ascendant; and when he had seen a little of Mrs. Fielding, he was in no respect surprised at what he considered the success of her training.

At Mr. Fielding's request, Mr. Sydney accompanied them when they went into the country for the summer, and there, one happy day, Georgiana received the assurance of his love. The wonder, the thankfulness, the humility, with which she did receive it, formed a curious contrast to the superb ideas she had once entertained of the pretensions of Mr. Fielding's eldest daughter.

Mr. Sydney was not rich, but he was of a good family, and free from mercenary motives himself, he had no fear of their imputation. Mr. Fielding, on his part, only rejoiced to give his daughter to one of whom he thought so highly. As soon as Mr. Sydney was settled in a curacy, the wedding was to take place.

The night before her marriage, Georgiana again sought her step-mother's dressing-room, and kneeling down by her side, said—'Mamma, I want to confess something to you. Do not think me a hypocrite—I do not think God will account me so—but I believe it was my admiration of Edward first made me wish to be religious. It then first

‘flashed upon me what a beautiful thing true religion was, and I hated myself when I felt the difference.’

A new light struck on Helen’s mind. ‘Was this in Madeira, love?’ she said.

‘Yes, mamma. I might have loved religion from seeing it in you and papa; but I don’t know how it was, it never struck me so much till I saw Mr. Sydney.’

‘Then it was not Celia’s death which first made you thoughtful? Mrs. Russell thought it was.’

‘Oh, no, mamma, I had been thinking about religion weeks before that. I don’t think the fear of death would ever have made me care for religion,—I do not call that religion which is taken up for a selfish end. Perhaps you may think mine was, mamma—taken up to recommend me to Edward, but it was not that, indeed it was not, mamma. When I came back to England I did not know that I should ever see him again, or if I did see him, I did not know that he might take any notice of me; but I could not go back to what I had been, and that was why I came and told my wretchedness to you. I would have told you about Edward then, but I dared not; I was afraid you would not think I was sincere.’

‘Perhaps I might have suspected you, my dear child, but it would have been wrong; for how could I tell what wondrous methods our Heavenly Father might take to draw you to Himself? And if the love of goodness and of God, who is Perfect Goodness, *does* penetrate the soul, what right have

we to say it has come the wrong way? In fact the natural way is by the action of one spirit on another; and I always thought, my dear, that what you wanted was to be taken out of self.'

'Yes, mamma, that *was* what I wanted. I am ashamed to think how little I loved anybody. I really cared about nothing but myself. But now my eyes seem to be opened, and I can see how good you are, and how good you have always been to me; and I hate to think how ungrateful I was, especially when I used to suspect it was you who kept papa up to not letting me be as gay as I wanted. Oh, how glad I am now that he stood firm about that.'

Caresses, and mutual confessions and forgiveness followed, till at last the lateness of the hour forced them to part.

Helen's intercourse with her own family since her marriage had been frequent and cordial. She had not disappointed the expectations of her unmarried sisters, but had given them the advantages of society which her position enabled her to offer. Harriet Tyrrel had married an officer in the Indian army, and gone out with him to India. Mr. Tyrrel had died not long after his youngest daughter left home. Mrs. Tyrrel and her daughter Emma still continued to live at Milnwood, though in a smaller house.

Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt kept up a close intimacy with the Fieldings; and favourable changes might, from time to time, have been noticed in Mr. Mordaunt's fulfilment of his clerical obligations. Mrs.

Mordaunt was forced to acknowledge that Helen bore her honours meekly; and the sisters were closer friends than they had been heretofore. Julia could not help, indeed, feeling a little aggrieved at the birth of Helen's child, and thought it hard upon the poor girls that a son and heir should appear so late in the day. She prophesied that the boy would be spoilt, and be a regular torment to his sisters; but this prediction, like many others, was doomed to fail. Mr. Fielding hated oppression in all forms; and Frank, in himself an amiable and tender-hearted little fellow, was never permitted to tyrannize even over a kitten.

From the Randolphs Helen was never long divided. They generally came up to London in the spring, as Dr. Randolph had received an appointment which required his occasional residence, and in the summer the families often managed to be together. After Georgiana's marriage, Mr. Fielding purchased a place within an easy drive of Milnwood, and, whilst retaining their London house, he and Helen, with the children, spent there a great part of the year.

It was a real delight to Dr. Randolph to visit the Fieldings—to see his old friend and pupil in her gentle graciousness doing her work as a wife and mother, and to feel that she was only using this world as a threshold to a better and higher.

As he looked on her he learned to estimate yet more fully the worth of those principles to which he well knew her present peace and usefulness were owing. The belief in God as a Father, and in Re-

demption as the result of His fatherly love—the belief that this salvation is for all, and that this alone is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil—the belief that the essence of satisfaction is the self-sacrificing love and perfect obedience of the Divine Son—the belief finally that all goodness is of God, and has its home and consummation in Him—these were the lights which, revealing to her an adorable friend in whom she could fully trust, had dispersed the clouds which dimmed the youth, and threatened to blight the womanhood of Helen Tyrrel.

THE END.

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